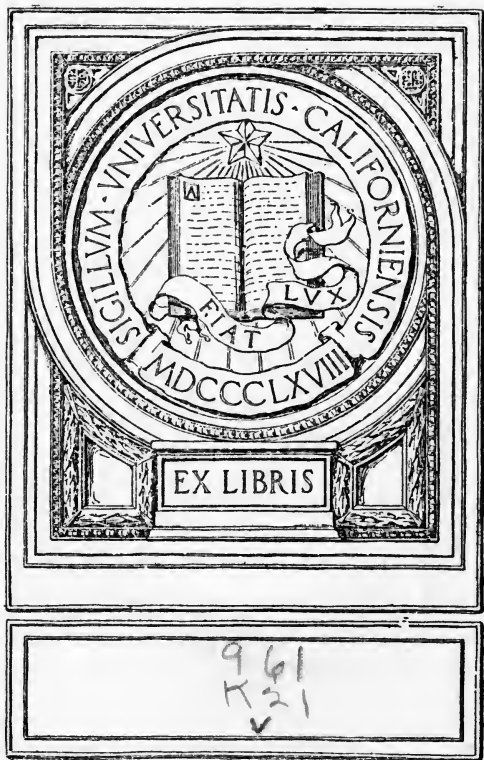
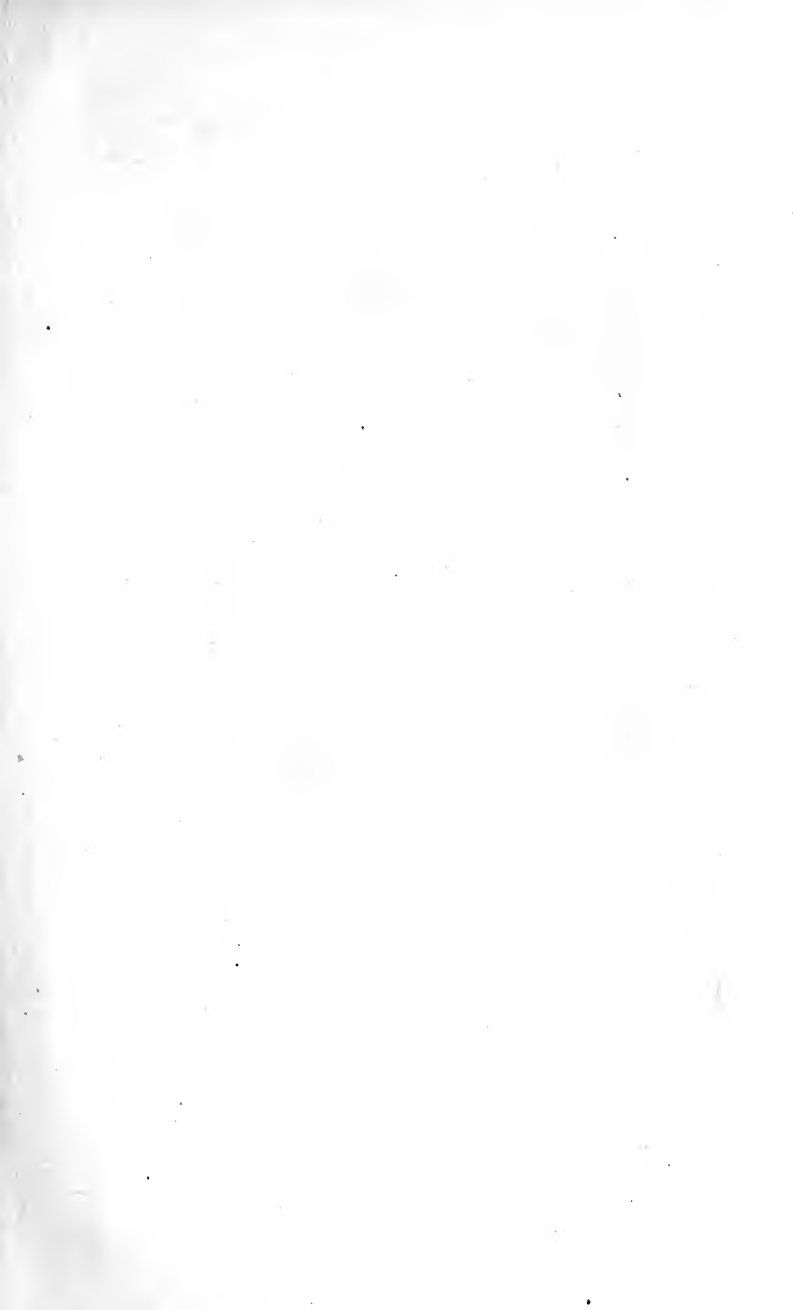


# VICTORIOUS



REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN









# VICTORIOUS

*A Novel*

*By*

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

AUTHOR OF

THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE  
OUR NAVY AT WORK  
ETC., ETC.

*He Who Gives All Gains All*



INDIANAPOLIS  
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**VICTORIOUS**





# VICTORIOUS

## CHAPTER I

### THE OVERTURE

ON THE second of April, 1917, among the multitude of events, portentous and minor, taking place in the experience of the world's people, the following occurred in the lives of those persons with whom this chronicle is chiefly concerned:

At 5:36 A. M., a mature alarm-clock, which lost six minutes every night, broke the stillness that had, for seven hours and more, prevailed in Sarah Brown's bedroom. Mrs. Brown awoke instantly, but she did not instantly get up. Hers was a small town, and the citizens of small towns are early risers, but her hours out of bed were so long and so wearisome that she had no inclination to lengthen them. So she lay there, pretending to herself that she had better begin the day by planning what she was to do, although aware that what she would have to do would be only what she had done daily for many years.

She sat up at last, however, and walked, barefoot, a tall thin figure that patently had once been pleasing, to the 1870 bureau. A lamp stood there, and she lit it.

For her inattentive gaze the mirror presented a dark-browed, sallow face, rather sunken and deeply lined, under plentiful hair of black and silver. Her features were still handsome, though their expression was one, not of present strength, but of strength that had been and was departed.

She dressed mechanically and stole softly down the stairs in her slippers and out to the kitchen, where she set the kettle

to boiling over the gas stove. Then she went to the hall and called up to the third floor:

"An-n-n-dy!"

There was no answer.

"Andy!" called Mrs. Brown.

From somewhere aloft, a sleepy "Yes, mother" replied.

Mrs. Brown opened the windows of the dining-room. The rumor of the frogs had hardly ceased along the river, but, borne on the inrush of spring air, there came the quick clucking call of house-hunting robins. The fluttering window-curtains were of a cheap lace, and on the sills stood tomato-cans covered with crêpe-paper and bearing red geraniums; the curtains needed washing, but the coal-dust from the heavy freight traffic somewhat excused that. Of late years, Mrs. Brown's chief method of lightening household cares had lain in postponing them; since it was only meals that could not well be postponed, she confined herself just now to breakfast, and to hurrying her son, whose late hours with his books made him dilatory in the mornings.

"You'll be late at the office," she called again.

"I *am* getting up, mother."

"Then let me hear you moving!"

From the attic bedroom came a double thump.

"You're just lying in bed and pounding your shoes on the floor!" called Mrs. Brown.

It was rather a game between them, that thumping, though neither openly admitted it. However grown-up he must be during the rest of the day, Andy was his mother's little boy for those few minutes each morning, and she was not unhappily aware of it. Now, the matutinal game ended, a dim head thrust itself over the top of the stair-well.

"Don't you believe me?" it asked.

"Yes," said Sarah reluctantly. "But you're not dressed. You'd better hurry: the eggs are on."

A moment later, she had further evidence of her son's awakening: all the way down-stairs floated the music of his resonant voice. He was singing *It's a Long Way to Tipperary*, while he searched under the bed for a lost collar-button.



The eggs were not "on," but Mrs. Brown put them there. This gave her a moment of leisure. She opened the front door and went out upon the small square porch.

A girl was sauntering down the street, a blonde girl with a plump pert face. Hooked over her arm was an empty basket that swayed as she walked. Her bright blue eyes laughed at Sarah Brown, to whom she said "Good morning."

"Going to market?" she added.

No, Mrs. Brown was not going to market; she had "got her things up street last night," but:

"Will you be in time, Minnie?" asked Andy's mother.

"I guess not," said Minnie; "I never am. Still, we get nearly everything at the Shuman's stall, and Chrissy Shuman always saves them for me."

## II

Minnie went on to the market-house. That big building with the bowed roof was still crowded by townspeople, gentle and considerate enough in most of the occupations of life, but now jostling one another before the heavily laden stalls behind which Amishmen in shovel-hats and Mennonite-women in black poke-bonnets stood to sell the produce of their uberous farms.

Through a score of greetings, Minnie edged her way toward the most fecund stall in the market-house. It bent under piles of tempting food methodically arranged, and it recoiled from the concerted onslaught of a phalanx of the town's best people. Back of it stood, selling his wares, an imperturbable Amishman in his brown homespun, large, bearded, his hair flowing free to the nape of his neck and then cut with square severity. A buxom, bonneted wife, her ample bosom covered by a sober kerchief, assisted him, and, at one corner, their broad-shouldered boy, the adolescent replica of his father, red-cheeked, smiling, served still other customers and looked with dark expectant eyes beyond the buyers.

Minnie leaned against a neighboring stall until a moment when the Amishman and his wife were entangled in the hag-

gling of a local bank-president. Then she promptly approached the boy.

"Hello, Chrissly," she said.

Chrissly dropped a cabbage that was on its way to the outstretched hands of Colonel Eskessen, owner and editor of the *Americus Daily Spy*. In the boy's eyes, expectancy became realization; his broad grin showed twin rows of white and even teeth. At first he could not speak; he could only bob his head.

"How do you feel about the Germans now?" asked Minnie. The grin faded.

"Ok," said Chrissly, "the Germans is all right. Mind what I tol' you las' market a'ready? What fer have we to mix in an' pick on 'em?" The red in his cheeks deepened. "An' now the pressident is goin' afore Conkress, they says, an' talk some more still. *Des ish alle letz*—I mean, that's all wrong yet." He stumbled between his two idioms, and then his emotion tripped him into the jungle of his native Pennsylvania-Dutch. "*Die prerogative powers fom pressident*—"

"That's all right," laughed Minnie. "I guess nobody's going to get hurt. Got my things I told you last market I'd want?"

Chrissly returned to his form of English, and to radiance.

"All but that chicken," he said. "The chickens is all gone."

Colonel Eskessen was prodding a lump of butter with a forefinger. He conveyed the forefinger to his mouth; but he eyed Minnie restively.

"Gone? The chickens all gone?" gasped Minnie.

"I couldn't help it," pleaded the now discomfited Chrissly. "My pappy sold 'em when I wasn't lookin'." Minnie was pouting. "But I saved a duck fer you still," said Chrissly.

Colonel Eskessen was abstractedly eating dried-beef from a pile on the stall and glowering at the unheeding girl. Chrissly proceeded to fill her basket with food that, contrary to the market-rules against reservations, he had retained for her.

## III

Out of "the Browns' house," having breakfasted, came Andy. He was just a lank freckled lad, with a cheerful face, and he was clad in all the effulgence of a small town's "swell dresser"; there were boys exactly like him, that morning, in hundreds of towns throughout the United States, at first glance in no wise remarkable; and yet, about him as about them, there was that which commanded confidence and won affection. Perhaps, in Andy, it was the frankness of his really fine brown eyes, or the earnestness and enthusiasm of the light that, issuing thence, enfolded him as with an aura of idealism. Perhaps it was his innocence and that lack of humor which can exist, in one of our people, by the very side of a full share of the American sense of fun. He radiated energy and good will. He obviously gave, and he obviously so expected a fair return that he never dreamed the need of demanding it.

People coming from market smiled back at him. When he turned into Elm Avenue, which is the main street of the town, the girls at the "Fashion Emporium" and the "Racket Store," who went to work early, called "Hello"; so did the employees on their way to the silk-mill and the umbrella-factory and the shirt-factory, and the proprietor of the "Philadelphia Shoe Store" crossed the street to "give him an item."

Andy, on his way along Second Street, had passed the old stone Blunston house, an ivied relic of colonial times, shut up now these several years, and was wondering whether its apparent changelessness was symbolic of the town. Somebody had said so. Somebody had said—it must have been Lawyer Dickey—that in Americus, save for the temperature, which was never the same for twenty-four hours on end, each day was like its predecessor, and Colonel Eskessen had supplemented: "But none of them unpleasant." Andy saw both points but didn't wholly agree with the former. He might have admitted that its atmosphere of contentment was the salient quality of this town rising from the silver river and surrounded by high and gentle hills; but he would have pro-

tested—he protested now to himself, as he walked whistling, officeward—that he found variety here.

Of course, there was not much variation in the routine of a *Daily Spy* reporter. He knew just what, within certain well defined limits, this morning and the afternoon would bring forth: he would report to Colonel Eskessen; glance at the Philadelphia papers to see whether President Wilson really meant to say anything decisive in his heralded appearance before Congress; ask the copy-boy to save him the New York *World* when it came in on the ten-thirty train, so that he shouldn't miss Owen Evans' Paris dispatches; and then he would go on his route about town seeking the local news. He would write that, or his share of it—the same sort of news that he always wrote—would go home to midday dinner, come back, and read proof and go home again, this time to supper. But there was always the evening. Last evening there had been a party at the Kellers', and to-night, in the Armory, the Four-Leaf Social was going to give a dance.

He had passed from these thoughts and was wondering whether "we'll get into the war," and cheerily trusting that we might, when, looking up, he saw Minnie Taylor coming toward him, her full market-basket on her arm. He flushed a little and touched his pale blue necktie, to make sure that it was just where it ought to be: one night he had had a horrible nightmare; he dreamed that he was going to the office and met Minnie and found he had no necktie on.

Minnie and Andy were of the same age: it was that age at which the girl is so much older than the boy. Minnie saw Andy approaching, though she pretended not to, just as he saw her and pretended he didn't; but Minnie gave no furtive touches to her person or apparel: she knew that she was right.

"Hello," she said.

Andy said: "Hello." He looked at the basket and put a wholly unnecessary question: "Been to market?"

"Yes. Where'd you think?"

"The North Pole. Wish I could carry that for you, but I've got to hurry to the office."

"You always do have to. And it's heavy to-day, too." She

let her eyes meet his. "Chrissly Shuman gives me good measure."

In the language of the town, Andy was "going with" Minnie; that is the way that Americus described the beginnings of courtships. Andy had never seen Chrissly, whose father had only recently deserted the Doncaster market for that in Americus, and Minnie knew this. If, however, she wanted to waken any jealousy in the heart of her admirer, she failed.

"Be sure you're on time for the dance to-night," he said. "I'll come round at half-past seven."

Minnie thought that too early.

"Well," said Andy, "maybe there won't be many more dances."

"Why not?"

"Perhaps we're going to get into this war." (Andy hoped we were going to get into the war, but he didn't think so.) He spoke only because the conjecture struck him as one that it was manly to utter.

"I don't see what that's got to do with dances," said Minnie. She turned up her little nose. "Besides, we're not going to get into it. Everybody says so. War? We should worry."

She gave him a sprig of trailing-arbutus that Chrissly Shuman had given her.

So Andy went whistling to the *Spy* office, reported to Colonel Eskessen, glanced at the Philadelphia newspapers, decided that nothing tremendous was going to happen, reserved the New York *World* against his return and started on his route. All was just as it had been since he first "went on" the *Spy*; all was just as he had known it would be; as far as work was concerned, all would go on just this way forever. War? He looked at the smiling people on Elm Avenue, at the busy shops, at the quiet dwelling-houses that lined the side-streets; he looked across the shining river at the peaceful hilltop fields hedged about with forests of pine: soon the spring wheat would be green there, and then soon it would be yellow; a little while and it would be harvested and sent on its long way to feed the European participants in battle. But that would be, as it had been, America's only part in Armageddon. He

wished it were not so, but so it would be. War? Minnie's irony was right: we should worry!

## IV

Colonel Kai Eskessen, however, being an older man, and an older newspaper-man, than Andy, was wont to read the news with another sort of eye. To-day, after he had started Andy and Kepler, the senior reporter, on their rounds, the colonel, in his cluttered office, did first follow his custom of clipping and pasting editorials from the Philadelphia journals and of sending them to the composing-room to be placed, uncredited, in the editorial column of that evening's *Spy*, but when he then turned, also as usual, to their first pages to look over the important news of the day, he perused the reports from Washington with a face that grew grave and graver.

The colonel was a short shambling man. He had pale eyes with a good-humored twinkle in them and a head quite bald in its curiously square top, across which he carefully brushed the scanty, neutral-colored locks released for such service by a part low over his left ear. His coat was never without its G. A. R. button and, although in excellent health and the owner of a prosperous newspaper, he drew a comfortable Civil War pension. The farmers at the semi-weekly market objected, behind his back, to his custom of making his breakfast by sampling their wares, and his political opponents, for he dabbled in politics, said that he had no journalistic backbone—they declared that the *Spy's* motto was "All the news it's safe to print"—but he was a good husband and a kindly man; he understood the difficult art of small-town journalism, and, if he suppressed more interesting facts than he printed, his reticences were to conceal faults, never to withhold praise, and they kept him friends with four-fifths of the town.

The colonel had served through one war, and lived through another. He knew what a war was, and he did not want his country to enter one, if entrance could be avoided honorably. Life had become neat and comfortable; things had seemed fixed—and in his particular case, as in the case of most of his

friends, the source of this well-being was a slowly and peacefully evolved body of investments that war would almost certainly calcitrate.

He turned to the financial pages and the stock-reports. Already there were signs of uneasiness.

The colonel called the copy-boy.

"If anybody comes in, Bud," he said, "tell 'em I've gone next door to Lawyer Dickey's on business and I'll be back in ten minutes."

He went into the ground-floor room of the building next beyond his own. It had been intended for a shop, but Lawyer Dickey had always used it as his office.

"Jim," said the colonel, "I thought I'd just drop in to see you about collecting those unpaid subscriptions, but I must have left the list on my desk. I don't seem to have it about me."

He did not offer to go back to get the list. Every day Colonel Eskessen came in for a ten-minutes' chat with his life-long friend, which lasted for at least half an hour, and every day he made some such excuse as the unpaid subscriptions for visiting in business-hours. The subscriptions were never collected; the colonel did not want them collected; they were those of old friends that, he knew, could neither afford to be without the paper nor yet to pay for it.

Dickey was the colonel's antithesis. He was big and aggressive; he looked like Daniel Webster in his old age. He swore like a sailor and said "Now I Lay Me" every night before he got into bed; when Lawyer Dickey had won a suit for the Pennsylvania Railroad by proving contributory negligence on the part of the legless, damage-claiming employee, and by thundering that the fellow had been drunk while on duty, Jim Dickey would make a special trip to Philadelphia—on a pass, to be sure—and see that the losing suiter was pensioned.

"Sit down, Kai," said Dickey. "Still afraid we're going to war?"

The colonel sighed.

"It looks that way," said he.

"Not on your life," said Dickey. "That'd be something definite, and anything definite's as contrary to the principles of that fellow down in Washington as eating lettuce with a fork is contrary to the principles of a rabbit."

"Well, I don't know. He may be forced into it."

"Forced? You don't know what you're talking about! You can't force a rabbit to fight."

"But Jim," protested the colonel, "he's as good as said—"

"He's as good as said a hundred things on every important subject that's come up since he's been in office," Dickey interrupted, "and every one of the things he's said has contradicted the other ninety-nine. Look at Mexico"—he jerked his head toward the southern wall as if there were a map of Mexico there instead of a case of calf-bound law-books. "He double-crossed Huerta, the only chance Mexico had. Then he played with Villa and told Carranza to get out of Villa's back yard. Next day he was across the fence with Carranza and helping him heave rocks at Villa. He sent a few soldiers into Mexico, ordered 'em out, sent 'em in again, ordered 'em out again, called for more soldiers—just enough for the Mexicans to laugh at—told some of those they needn't come after all; then drew out the whole kerboodle. Forced to fight! Good God, I only wish he could be! I've lived seventy-five years like a good American, but I'm beginning to think I've lived too long; I'm beginning to be ashamed of my country when it sits around and gets rich out of letting other folks fight its battles." The old man thumped his desk. "The only reason for expecting he'll fight is that he got himself elected by saying he kept us out of war!"

Colonel Eskessen looked gloomily into the street.

"I telephoned the Doncaster *New Era* this morning," he countered. "They say the A. P.'s got his speech and it's sure for war."

"Oh, of course he's said something!" jeered the lawyer. "What did he do when the Dutchmen blew up the *Lusitania*? He typewrote 'em a letter! Then they torpedoed the *Hesperian*; he typewrote 'em a letter. Then they torpedoed the *Arabic*—and he typewrote to 'em again. I don't believe they



read 'em any more—they don't have to. 'Dear William: kindly remit.' Why, there've been more Americans killed by Germans in this war than were killed by the Spanish in our war with Spain. Did you know that?"

Colonel Eskessen nodded.

"Well," pursued Dickey, "who cares? We're too proud to fight. The only thing we do is to send a Texas politician abroad to make peace, and he's the man that says he forewarned Europe of the war—forewarned every country, on his own showing, except his own!"

"I know all that, Jim," said the colonel; "but the events of the last month certainly seem to indicate that the president can't help himself."

"Poof!" said Lawyer Dickey. "February's armed neutrality's as good as we'll ever get, and we'll probably go back on that in May. We won't have war till all the typewriters are worn out and the typewriter-factories shut down."

## V

At exactly the moment when Mrs. Sarah Brown's alarm-clock was waking her in Americus, Andrew Blunston was getting ready to go to bed in New York. The hotel-room that he had occupied since his return from France a month ago was littered with papers, for he had been writing all night.

Blunston rubbed his deep-set, dark eyes. His face was weather-beaten and his brown hair streaked with gray. His physique was excellent, but this last war was wearing. He had written his account of the first battle of Ypres by candle-light, under shell-fire, working for ten hours at a stretch and after three days without sleep and almost without food, yet now, in this April of 1917, he felt the effects of one night's toil.

He was too tired to reread his article for the evening edition of the paper that employed him; he must leave that to the copy-desk. He had rung for a bell-boy five minutes since. Now the boy came in. Blunston thrust his manuscript into an envelope and handed it to the bell-boy for delivery two hours later.

"All right," said the boy; "an' here's a telegram for you. It must 'a' come las' night an' they forgot it. I found it at the desk."

He went out, and Blunston opened the telegram:

"Passport Bureau State Department refuses re-issue your passport doubtless due your criticism administration's previous war policy must get right with them if you're to be any use in case America takes active part in war.

"Brannan, Mg. Ed."

Blunston went to the door. The vague figure of the retreating bell-boy was just disappearing around the corner of the hall. Blunston summoned him to return.

"Have me wakened at eleven o'clock," he said, "and see that a long-distance call to the War Department is put in for ten forty-five."

The door closed again, and Blunston, flinging off his coat and waistcoat, paused before a leather traveling-case for photographs, which stood open upon his dressing-table. There was a picture of his mother and one of his father, both reproductions of daguerreotypes, and beside these the faded likeness of a young woman; she wore the "mandolin-sleeves" of twenty-odd years ago, and they were so ample that a half of each had been beyond the range of the camera; she was black-browed and black-haired; her face was handsome, strong, but it was unlined.

Blunston flung wide the windows and looked out, for a few minutes, at the early morning quiet of Fifth Avenue. The famous street was empty; the city seemed sleeping through the dawn.

## VI

Six hours later, in another part of New York, a girlish figure, swathed in a peacock-blue kimono, was sitting before a telephone. Any one entering the bedroom would have seen only her back and, above a graceful neck, coils of really golden hair.

She spoke into the transmitter; her voice was low, but of excellent timbre:

"Mr. Tottem, this is Miss Raeburn. Good morning."

There was an answer.

"Mr. Tottem," said the wearer of the peacock-blue kimono, "I've thought all night long about your offer. I think I've seen all its advantages. I know it would mean a lot to a girl that has only been playing seconds, the way I have, and, judging by what you tell me about London, war would be hard on the stage and good for pictures; but I can't accept your offer. It's very kind of you, and I'm grateful, only I mean to stick to the speaking-stage, even if we *should* go to war."

## VII

That was at about half-past eleven. At the same time, but at a time recorded with him by Central reckoning, the occupant of a bed in a Chicago hotel—that hotel being the permanent home and voting-address of the sleeper—began to show signs of awakening.

The sheet, which described a gentle arc above the occupant's stomach, rose and fell with less regularity. Farther down, a foot was evidently twitching. The coverings hid even the top of the sleeper's head, but a plump fist was presently extended, and then a whole-hearted yawn disturbed the quiet of the room.

The fist opened; it closed upon the sheet and dragged it down—down below a thicket of iron-gray hair, below half-opened hazel eyes, aquiline nose and a little gray mustache and a double chin. The process did not cease until it had revealed the front of a silk nightshirt embroidered with pink rosebuds.

Mr. B. Frank McGregor was awake.

Somebody had been pounding at the door. Mr. McGregor, without arising, reached the key and turned it.

"Come in," he said, and there entered a colored boy in the uniform of the hotel.

The boy held out two slips of paper, one white and one green.

"Mornin', Mr. McGregor," said the boy. "Here's yo' ticket an' yo' Pullman."

"Good morning, George," said Mr. McGregor. "What time does the train start?"

"Yo' got three-quarters of an hour, Mr. McGregor."

"All right. Clear away that mess"—Mr. McGregor's nod indicated a table littered with bottles, glasses, syphons, and the blue-prints of what appeared to be plans for aeroplanes. "Tell Harry to send up my regular breakfast and then phone my chauffeur to bring the car round. Say I've got to go to Washington and I'm in a hurry."

### VIII

At one o'clock, eastern time, a shaggy-haired, dark man, with protruding eyes, then copy-reader for a New York newspaper and on the day-shift, entered his paper's office and paused, as usual, before the case of little boxes that held employees' mail. He drew out one envelope. It was a manila envelope and addressed in pencil to "Mr. Louis Garcia."

He read:

"There has been found in your locker a check from *The Star* for \$75. This confirms me in my belief that, despite your denials, it was you who sold our aldermanic-bribery story to that paper. Under the circumstances your services are no longer required here. Please draw from the cashier one week's salary in advance. Check from *The Star* enclosed herewith.

"JAS. M. BRANNAN."

### IX

Over the Haytian coast, that second of April, the sun, which had still a month of uncontested sovereignty ahead of it before the advent of the rains, shone ardently out of a waxen, turquoise sky. Only the laziest of breezes floated up from the Caribbean and found its way through the Windward Passage; it just ruffled the sea to a chatoyant luster, and, with the quietly moving sea, moved a few ships—black shapes of floating steel.

Ashore, between two groups of trees, the one palmettos, the other a motley of pines and Bermuda cedars, a row of men crouched and strained their eyes across the glimmering plain toward the mountains. A light haze hung above the land. Back there were rising forests in which cocoa, ginger and arrowroot grew wild, thickets of yellow acoma, manchineel, mahogany, satinwood and cinnamon. From the edges of those forests small puffs of smoke appeared, and now and then a bullet slipped through the palmettos and sent a great frond circling slowly downward. The men near the shore also had guns in their hands: they were American marines.

"What's that?" demanded one of them.

He pointed to a four-legged, cringing figure that was coming toward them, from the nearest forest-edge, at a sort of slinking trot.

"It's one of them wild hawgs," said his neighbor.

A third man had better eyes. "Looks like a wolf," said he.

It did look like a wolf. Even though it was coming directly toward them, they could see a bushy tail sagging low between its hind legs. It had pointed ears, erect. It was a brindled brown and gray.

"Wolf, hell," said, however, the first man. "Wolves is the only kind o' wild animal they ain't got in this stinkin' hole. It's some sort of a dawg."

The third speaker raised his rifle:

"I'm goin' to take a chance at him."

"Hi! Don't you do it!" A dozen voices joined the chorus of protest. A lieutenant's added to them official finality.

The men began whistling. The animal stopped, regarded them uncertainly, came on.

He came all the way up to them, wagging his bushy tail without raising it. He did not leap upon them or kiss them; he did not bark; but very quietly, and yet very briskly, he moved from one outstretched palm to another and shoved his damp cold muzzle into each.

"Gee," said the man that had first observed him: "Here's a mascot for us! I told you guys it was a dawg."

## X

France rises five hours before America; it was six o'clock of the afternoon in France when Louis Garcia was reading his discharge in New York, but at that hour there was still in progress at a corner of France something that had begun there before the dawning. It had begun long before Mrs. Brown's alarm-clock wakened her, and yet it was no more than under way when Minnie Taylor said: "War? We should worry!"

There had been an unexpected German advance at an inconsequential point of the Western Front. It was nothing much. It had, indeed, no military importance whatever. It secured, next day, only a few lines in the American newspapers. Nevertheless, it meant death to scores of persons; it meant ruin to hundreds, and in the present chronicle it is a factor not lightly to be disregarded.

In the early darkness had sounded a rushing of feet, a pounding upon doors; then cries and lights and confusion. Men swore; women wailed; roughly wakened children shrieked impotently. Horses and oxen were hastily harnessed by lantern-light, live stock herded; furniture hustled from ground-floor rooms; out of windows, clatteringly opened, mattresses and cradles were tossed.

Within an hour the houses of a village were left tenantless, the village empty.

Morning, and all the rest of the day, showed, down a long, white, poplar-bordered road, the procession of one of those caravans so familiar now, a few years ago remembered only by them who remembered 1870. Wagons, carts, bicycles, wheelbarrows and baby-carriages hauled by animals, dragged by men and women, propelled by children, and all heavily freighted. Here, on the toppling top of some ramshackle conveyance, heaped with the household goods of generations, a great-grandfather, too feeble to walk, carrying his great-grandchild; there, chairs, tables, bedding, clothes, kitchen-utensils, tossed together in panic; everywhere, blocking the white roadway, all but the decrepit plodding onward afoot.

There were mothers with babies at the breast; plucking at their mothers' skirts there were crying children that had not so long since learned to walk. There were white-haired men, grasping palsied canes and bending far toward the earth that was soon to receive them. There were girls that sobbed and boys with swollen eyes round from fear; and there was a mad woman that, in 1914, had given her betrothed to the hopper of war and now fled in her wedding-clothes. But men of fighting-age there were none.

Whoso could at all carry carried a bundle weighted to the theretofore unguessed limit of the bearer's strength—a bundle pregnant with convertible property, heirlooms or pathetic keepsakes. Every little while the limit was exceeded or the road too hard: a bundle fell and aborted its sorry contents amid the dust.

There was little talking, only commands to the draught-animals, sometimes the words of one woman seeking to comfort another, or of a mother petting or urging a child. For the most part, the caravan might have been a caravan of mutes, pressing their palms against their foreheads, making helpless gestures with their eloquently opened hands, dully accepting the inevitable.

One girl there was, however, who went with her hands clenched and her head up. She was broad-shouldered, full-bosomed, erect. She walked as only peasants walk and queens. Others, all the others, were as insensate ligan swirled along with a torrent; in this girl's agate eyes there burned a cold fire, under the tan upon her cheeks there was a red; she bit into the crimson of her lower lip until it grew as white as the strong compressing teeth. Her name was Léonie Picaud.

## XI

In the Capitol at Washington, a lantern-jawed man was addressing a joint session of the two Houses of Congress. He was saying:

"But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our

hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood, and her might, for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.”

Thus, for those with whom we are here concerned, and for millions of other persons, the second of April, 1917.



## CHAPTER II

IN WHICH THE MEMORY OF AN OLD LOVE PLAYS HAVOC WITH A NEW; CRIES "PLACE A LA JEUNESSE!"; AND MAKES MENTION OF A VISION OF JEANNE D'ARC

BLUNSTON—he had his passport now—sat in the smoking-car of the afternoon accommodation-train. He wore his old war-correspondent's uniform. For the first time in many years, he was going home.

He could not say why; or would not. There had been a time when he loved all Doncaster County, and, especially, Americus, but that was when he loved also a girl of the small town; and the girl married another man. The Americus of his birth and boyhood had become only that dream-home whereto tired and busy men withdraw, from crowded corners of the earth, in that brief pause between daylight and evening, or in the last minutes of waking before sleep. Now, not only in age, but in deed. Blunston had almost reached what he knew must be the summit of his career; a few inevitable steps, and he would have achieved, in his profession, the peak he had been so long striving for. During the breathing-spell before that last ascent, something had compellingly urged him to make, for so long as possible, the dream-home real.

In the Doncaster station, where he changed trains, he bought a copy of the *Americus Daily Spy*. He smiled at the quaint wording; it represented a tradition:

"A delightful social occurrence occurred last night, when ten of her young friends tendered a surprise-party to Miss Annie Drumbaugh, residing at 922 Barber Street, on the occasion of her seventh birthday. There was a gift-shower and various games were played. At a seasonable hour refreshments were served and an enjoyable time was had by all."

There was not much changed in the *Spy*. In another column he did find an account of a fire in a hardware-store, written with spirit and a vivid appreciation of dramatic and news values; the author of that, he reflected, would soon be working for a Philadelphia paper; but most of the material might have been clipped from any issue of twenty years ago.

He turned back those twenty years.

Sarah Tollens had then been on the safe side of the rigid social dividing-line of the town. Her people—she was an only child—were proudly poor, and Sarah was tall and dark and handsome, and Blunston was engaged to her; but there had drifted to the little community a certain Phil Brown, one of those American adventurers who had flocked to Hawaii in the early nineties and who, having first cast their lot with the cause of Liliuokalani, ended by plotting her overthrow. Marriage before acquaintance is one of our national dogmas: Brown, folding about him the mantle of romance, married Sarah out of hand in the winter of 1896, and Blunston, deciding that since he could not have love, he must have labor, began his journalistic career. Everybody, he reasoned, must have in his life something bigger than himself. He saw no more of Americus; he thought no more than he could help of Sarah. Once Lawyer Dickey inserted in a legal communication the statement that the Browns had named their first-born Andrew at the mother's behest and McKinley at the father's, but Blunston tried to see no significance in the former name; later, Mr. Dickey ventured to remark that Phil, having enlisted for service in Cuba and got as far as Porto Rico, was dead of red-tape and fever at Montauk Point, but Blunston did not get the letter until many months later at Peking.

By that time, he was a war-correspondent, and even war-writing was an old story. The Boxer revolt, the Philippine rebellion, the Boer war and the Russo-Japanese, Italy's venture of 1912, numerous promising disturbances in Central and South America and both the Balkan conflicts—Blunston had seen something of them all. But since the autumn of 1914, he had held that the Entente was fighting America's

battles along with its own, and he had been devoting his energies to the aid of those voices which pleaded with us to play our part. Now his country's feet were set upon the road to which he had helped to lead it; he himself beyond the draft-age, Blunston was, at all events, to crown his life's work by chronicling America's share in the World War.

There were those who did not like him for his previous propaganda, and there had been some trouble about securing the papers necessary to his return to France; these difficulties seemed at last at an end. The Committee on Public Information had announced that, by arrangement with the War Department, a dozen correspondents would accompany our armies abroad. He had secured for himself one set of credentials.

He pushed his service-cap back from his grizzled hair. There was a light on his weather-beaten face.

The train rounded a hillside. Blunston looked out at the mile-and-a-half breadth of river dotted with rocks and leafy islands and surrounded by wooded hills. This was Home.

The first of the rules to provide for a happy homecoming is that commanding us not to remain long away. The station at which Blunston dismounted appeared to him smaller than formerly—and dirtier. The Three Mounts House and the Adams Hotel, which he remembered as prosperous hostleries, were fallen to the tavern-state. No city in China, no ruined village in Belgium had seemed so remotely strange to him.

At the corner of Second Street, where a farm-wagon was standing, he saw an Amish boy engaged in repairing some piece of harness. At least the Amish costume was familiar; its wearer might have been one of the acquaintances of the prodigal's early days, untouched by time.

"What is the best hotel in town?" asked Blunston.

The lad looked up.

"Sir?"

It was the old countryside equivalent of "what?" Blunston smiled in recognizing it. He repeated his inquiry.

"I don't know still." The Amish boy's teeth flashed a friendly grin, but he shook his long hair helplessly. "I heard

folks talk about the 'Americus' a'ready; but I ain't no use fer hotels."

In the past few weeks, the fact of war had come home with startling speed to hundreds of persons in Doncaster County; to Chrissly Shuman, who had as yet seen no soldiers, it now first came home in the form of a war-correspondent's uniform.

"They're tryin' to take me," confided Chrissly. "Us Amish don't hold by fightin'; but they're tryin' to take me 'cause I ain't joined church yet." His eyes smoldered as he bent again to his work. "Germany's all right," he said; "we ain't got no business pickin' on to Germany."

## II

A change in Elm Avenue Blunston saw immediately: it had been barbarously denuded of its trees, and standards for electric lights replaced them. The old-fashioned brick-dwelling that had stood opposite the Opera House in the memories of his boyhood was suffering, among its neighboring shops, from the tenantless disrepair of superannuated property "held for a rise in values," and when the returned native registered at the Hotel Americus, his name meant nothing to the impassive clerk.

Then he chanced to look over his shoulder and saw, coming up the center of the street, two hundred pounds of human flesh under a blue cap and in blue clothes. It couldn't be—and yet it was—"Babe" Campbell: "Babe," the town's only policeman when Blunston was a lad, hale at seventy-odd, the town's only policeman now. Blunston ran out and pumped the old man's heavy hand and shouted his greetings into the old man's long-deafened ears.

He was just about to reenter the hotel when he encountered Lawyer Dickey, headed for the barroom where, every afternoon on leaving his office, he took his sole daily dose of alcohol; a drink of whisky followed by a glass of lager-beer. The attorney spoke to him precisely as if they had parted but yesterday.

"There are odd things happening," said Lawyer Dickey,

when Blunston and he were seated at a dark table in the shadows behind the swinging doors. "People are changing life-long opinions. There's Hunter, the wall-paper man, a dyed-in-the-wool Republican and a G. A. R. at that: they've thrown so much sand in his eyes that I bet, if you talked ancient history to him, he'd say Bryan was right when he ruled that Americans ought to keep off the sea."

Few people speak in paragraphs; Blunston began paragraphs, but seldom ended one. His voice was quiet, and the conclusions of his sentences were generally lost outright.

"That *would* be ancient history," he began; "of course the people in Washington weren't really too proud to fight: only too fat . . . even to get ready . . ."

The war-correspondent left his lawyer still brooding over his beer, and walked toward Second Street, until he reached the house that his first American forefathers had built in the middle sixteen hundreds.

Standing in a vast plot of ground well away from the street, it was a long, stone, ivy-covered building, rather Lancashire than colonial. Blunston had not asked Lawyer Dickey to go back to his office for the key. The remaining son contented himself with strolling around the house and about the great yard behind.

Oak and honey-locust and Norway-maple, their riot of foliage made a grateful screen from the afternoon sun. The gardens had died of neglect; but a petulant cat-bird was calling from the thicket as one always used to call; there flashed from the Yellow Spanish cherry-tree an oriole in the colors that, thus seeing them, Sir George Calvert had chosen for his servants' livery.

There was no war here. The empty old house cast across the sunlight a slanting shadow like the cool breath of a peace centuries old.

No fence separated this yard from that of the distant house-next-door. That was a comfortable brick house, scarce fifty years its neighbor's junior, and it, too, had always been inhabited by Blunston's. He could see some women's frocks there now—probably those of the cousins he tepidly liked and

never wrote to, three women of about his own age and unmarried. The girls would have grown up to be like their father. He supposed he ought to go across to them.

He came upon a picture typical of the more leisurely phase of small-town life in America since the time when it ceased to be a farm isolated in the wilderness. Save for the costumes, Blunston could have imagined himself restored to the era of fox-hunting Quakers that were his ancestors. Black-haired Cousin Flora sat beside the tea-table on the grass; red-haired Cousin Mollie and red-haired Cousin Becky were chatting volubly to a tall, lean, spectacled man in a white waistcoat, who must be the Ralph Bolingbroke from the big gray house on Oak Street, who owned the local umbrella-factory; as well as to the merry, sharp-eyed young woman of considerable girth, who must be Bolingbroke's new second wife, and who talked instead of listening. Everything was correct, everything was pleasant; above all, everything was established.

His cousins greeted Blunston with shrill cries of delighted surprise; Ralph shook hands and gravely presented him to Mrs. Ralph. Blunston, who always drank tea in a sort of vague Celtic twilight, uttered attenuated sentences and was glad when Mrs. Ralph put an end to them by saying that she hadn't read his work but didn't approve of it. He wished that the conversation would swing away from himself and give him more news of the townspeople.

It did when Miss Hattie Lloyd arrived. Miss Hattie looked as old as the town and knew every evil thing that had ever been done in it; she was a miniature, witchlike body with a sharp red nose that met a sharp white chin; she perpetually hugged herself and shot pricking glances at you from the corners of her beady eyes whenever she said anything especially unpleasant.

The talk might have shifted without Miss Hattie's advent; nevertheless, it was Miss Hattie's knife that severed the thread.

"Andrew," she said, "I suppose you find people a good deal changed here, don't you?"

"No . . . perhaps . . . not seen many," he murmured.

"A good many that were up in the world have come down," said Miss Hattie. She seemed to find the fact decidedly satisfactory. "Seen Sarah Tollens?"

He knew it was this name he had been rather anxious to hear, but he did not like hearing it from Miss Hattie.

"Nobody sees her now." Miss Hattie cocked her head. "She lives in a dreadful part of town. Of course none of us have ever seen her since her marriage."

Blunston could feel the heat of his cousins' silent indignation. They had disapproved, he recalled, of Sarah when she broke her engagement to him, but they were not ghouls in the graveyard of other people's affections. He did not answer Miss Hattie.

Perhaps young Mrs. Bolingbroke felt the tension and wanted to relieve it: he was sure she meant no harm, but she said:

"Oh, yes: it's Mrs. Sarah Brown you're talking about. She was an old sweetheart of yours, wasn't she, Mr. Blunston?"

He smiled faintly. As soon as he decently could, he left. Mollie followed him to the gate.

"I'm sorry," she said. She knew he would know what she meant.

"Is it true?" asked Blunston.

"What that abominable old woman said? Well, yes, I'm afraid it is. Sarah's just dropped out. Only it oughtn't to be talked about because it's nobody's fault."

"No," said Blunston, "of course it isn't."

He was thinking of taking the evening train back to New York.

### III

It was Colonel Eskesson that kept Blunston in town over night. The short man with good-humored eyes and scant hair dragged across the bald flat top of his head had not altered within Blunston's memory, but he could not recall Blunston unaided.

"Why, so it is!" he beamed once the aid had been given.

"Darned if it isn't Andrew Blunston! How are you, *anyhow*? You must have had some exciting experiences in France. Better come with me to the Elks to-night; we're going to present wrist-watches to all the officers of Company C."

The colonel had had a busy day, as usual, and his made-up bow-tie had slipped around his low "stand-up" collar until it was directly under his right ear. He was still dazed by the war and its potential effect on his investments—there had been some absurd talk in the Philadelphia newspapers about the possibility of the government's taking over the railroads—and, as Blunston adapted his stride to the older man's, Colonel Eskessen dismissed the national situation with a chuckling reference to Lawyer Dickey:

"So you've seen Dickey? Yes, yes: same old Jim. Suppose he told you the Democrats were riding the country to perdition? He tells me that every morning, regular. What is it the fellow said in the magazine? 'Making the world safe for Democrats?' That's Dickey all over. Fine old man, Jim"—Mr. Dickey was perhaps two years the colonel's senior—"but—well, a little impulsive now and then."

At the Elks' headquarters, they passed, through a second-floor room in which the Americus Silver Cornet Band was playing, to a pleasantly cool balcony overlooking a leafy back yard. Several guests in uniform were there, and presently, after the wrist-watches had been conferred, the band played *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, and everybody joined in the chorus.

A voice rose clear of the others. It was not one of those voices superior and conscious of its superiority: it was distinctive because it had to be.

The singer was a very much dressed lad, a lad freckled, red-headed. He did not know that he was singing in a stronger voice than his neighbors; his face was radiant with a troubled enthusiasm, and his firm brown eyes were fixed on the war-correspondent.

Their glances met. The boy flushed. He stopped singing and looked away.

"Who is he?" asked Blunston.



"That?" said his host. "Oh, that's Andy."

"Andy?"

"Yes, one of our reporters. Andy Brown. You remember Sarah Tollens? Oh, yes, of course—"

The colonel also remembered something. He hurried away from the topic of Andy's parentage:

"His clothes are just part of his enthusiasm. So proud of being a reporter, you know. Has the news-sense. Oh, quite valuable: he knows everybody in Americus and who married everybody and who's cousin to who—and everybody knows him and likes him—everybody."

"Did this boy write a story in to-day's *Spy* about a surprise-party at . . ."

"Yes. He wrote our fire-story, too."

That he had written them both, Blunston wanted to say, was incredible!

"He's crazy to go to war," the colonel was saying. "Volunteered, but they found a heart-murmur. Just as well. The fellows say Andy came across a wounded rabbit out here in the woods one time; he carried it all the way back to town to be killed because he hadn't the heart to kill it himself."

Andy Brown did know everybody in Americus, but, for all his obviousness, there was nobody in Americus knew everything about Andy. His love of the woods and the river was common to most of the townsfolk; the spirit that strung dance-programs across his bureau was a spirit shared by half the other boys; his attentions to bangled Minnie Taylor were the mere effervescence of youth. But the war had set an indelible mark on his soul.

The sinking of the *Lusitania* began it. The effect of this, however, seemed to have passed away until he heard Lawyer Dickey talk about Germany treading on democracy's toes, when the chance of our joining the European struggle seemed to Andy a sort of heroic gambol. Then had come the acknowledgment of a state of war; the printed appeal to "Enlist and Avoid the Draft"—and to "Join Your Home Company and Fight Beside Your Friends." Andy was carried high on the flood of patriotism: only his mother's dependence had some-

what checked his progress. He dreamed a day-dream about Joan of Arc—a sort of Franco-American Joan of Arc, with golden hair and girlish figure and low and thrilling voice, but with a pure face and brave enkindling eyes—he volunteered.

Much of this, although he was not himself acquainted with it, Colonel Eskessen's talk conveyed to Blunston. He was in the midst of it when Blunston saw the president of the Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association rise:

"We have with us to-night," that gentleman said, "a son of Americus that Americus is proud of, a famous war-correspondent who has just returned from the Western Front, where some of our evening's guests will soon be going—"

In short, Blunston was called on for a speech.

When he sat down, and the company, with the notable exception of Andy, were singing *My Old Kentucky Home*, a waiter handed him a note. It was addressed to "Mr. Blunston, Present," and was written in the cramped, boyish hand of one that has long ago formed the habit of the typewriter. It asked the favor of an interview "after the meeting," and it came from Andy.

#### IV

In the damp coolness of the street, Andy was waiting. It was too dark to see him.

"Well?" said Blunston.

He wouldn't help the boy to utterance. He expected him to ask for a letter to some editor in Philadelphia.

"The Field Service Regulations say an accredited correspondent can have a messenger when he goes to France. Can I be your messenger?"

It came out in a burst. Blunston could hear the boy gasp at his temerity when he said it; he hoped the boy could not hear the gasp with which it was received.

". . . qualification," stammered Blunston. "Have you any?"

Andy had regained his desperate courage:

"I'm a hustler. Colonel Eskessen will tell you. And I'll

go for almost nothing—just enough to keep things running at home.”

“A war-correspondent . . . much of the danger, none of the glory.”

“Oh, I couldn’t be a correspondent.”

“Why not?”

“I can’t write.”

“. . . can’t tell till you try. Good story on the fire, poor on the surprise-party. . .”

“You—you asked the colonel who wrote them?”

Blunston swore softly: there was reportorial keenness in this young man.

“Sir?” asked Andy. He had not heard the oath, and he asked what Blunston had said with just the word the Amish boy had used.

The correspondent was amused: this was a queer mixture of sharpness and provinciality. His amusement betrayed him into a passing amiability.

“Do you know French?”

“I took it in high-school.”

“Oh, lord!—where did you learn to write?”

“I can’t. I just started in. Lately I’ve been trying to bone up. And then I study all the president’s speeches; he writes so well.”

“He—what?” asked Blunston.

“You don’t mean you don’t think so?”

Blunston’s answer was not intelligible. What he was thinking about, as they walked down the dark street, was something that Andy would never know.

“Sir?” said Andy.

This time the servile provincialism on the lips of Sarah Brown’s son annoyed the man that had loved Sarah Tollens.

“Don’t say that,” said Blunston sharply. “Never! You mean ‘What’: say ‘What.’”

“Yes, sir,” said the boy.

“And don’t say ‘Yes, sir’ and ‘No, sir.’ ‘Yes’ and ‘No.’ It’s the tone. . . .”

What was it Colonel Eskessen had told him? Something

about a wounded rabbit. This boy who couldn't kill a wounded rabbit wanted to be a war-correspondent.

"The thing's absurd," said Blunston; "the whole thing."—The mud, the filth, the risks, the horrors!—"Why do you want to go?" he asked.

Apparently Andy found it hard to talk of his emotions. Nevertheless, they were stronger than his tenderness for them: in a few disjointed, half-apologetic phrases, he made his hardened senior understand what the coming of war had meant to the boy in Americus, what the great rising of the nation, what it had been to him to volunteer, and what to be refused.

They had come to a halt, Blunston did not know why.

"Our own doctor said it was all nonsense about the heart-murmur," Andy said. "One man in ten has it, he told me. And it won't interfere with my work if you take me. I'm as strong and healthy as any man my age."

Blunston believed it. "Only," he persisted, "I still don't see. . . ."

And then Andy, in a flash and without violating the sanctity of his dream, made his poor Franco-American Joan of Arc a living thing to his hearer:

"I've got to do my part; everybody's got to. A fellow feels that. It's kind of as if Joan of Arc had come back, and come to America and reminded us of Lafayette, and as if she—she was really a saint, you know, right out of Heaven—" He broke off with a gulp. "I've got to help," he ended: "and this is the only way I can."

There was a burst of light beside them. It blazed over the face of the freckled boy, transfigured by earnestness, the lips compressed, the eyes on fire with a high eagerness. It came from an opened door, and in the doorway stood silhouetted the tall thin form of a woman.

"Is that you, Andy?" asked the woman.

"Yes, mother," said Andy. He laid an appealing hand on Blunston's sleeve. "Mother, this is—"

"It's impossible," Blunston almost shouted. "Don't need a messenger. Always work alone anyhow and . . ."

He turned to escape; but Andy's grip lost its persuasive quality; it became force; it held Blunston fast, while Andy said:

"Mother, this is Mr. Blunston, the famous war-correspondent. He's come to talk to you about my going over there to be his messenger."

Whereupon, leaving them facing each other, Andy ran incessantly into the house.

## V

Did Andy know of that old engagement, and was he making capital out of his knowledge? Blunston swept the thought away: whatever she might seem to others, to a boy his mother is always a wonder-worker; Andy had taken it for granted that, chance having brought about this meeting, Mrs. Brown could get her son what he most desired.

"I heard voices," she was saying—*her* voice was monotonous—"I always wait up for him—not that it's necessary; he always has been a good boy—and so I opened the door."

"How do you do, Sarah?" Blunston said.

Their cold hands met; hers was hard.

"How do you do, Drew?" There was an observable pause. Her back being to the light, she was as much hidden from him as Andy had been when they met on Elm Avenue. Blunston was glad to have his interlocutor concealed. "Won't you come in?" she asked.

"I—no. If you don't mind," he said, "I'd rather . . ."

The house was shabby; her brief hesitancy told him that. She wanted to encounter him no more than he wanted to encounter her. It was Andy's doing.

"Does An—does the boy," he hurried, "really want . . ."

"To go?" It was just the way she used always to help him out, and yet it was now with an air of weariness that he found painful. "He does want to. I didn't know he could care so much for anything."

Blunston noticed that she mentioned her son by the personal pronoun rather than by his Christian name.

"His whole heart's just set on it," she added.

Blunston had never dreamed of taking a messenger; he didn't need a messenger!

"Of course," Andy's mother continued, "he'll worry about me; but he made arrangements before—I mean when he volunteered—and he will now. I didn't know he was thinking of going this way—but I knew he meant to go somehow."

"You—you might lose him," said Blunston. After all, the fact had to be voiced.

He was thinking of her. She had said little of herself; she had said nothing of their past affection for each other. He should have remained in Americus. There was something above love, in love there was something above desire and pride: there was obligation. Sarah couldn't stand the blows, still less the slow attritions, which some women could stand. He might have softened these, and without her knowing it—oh, in a thousand ways! And that she could not stand those blows and attritions—yes, he had known that when he went away. "In the life of each, there ought to be something that is bigger than anything else": for such a something what chance had Sarah Tollens had?

"I know"—her head was bent, in the darkness her hands seemed to be plucking at her skirt—"and yet his heart is set on it, and, you see, he's done a lot for me—everything—and I've not been able to do anything for him and—well, letting him go is about all I've got to give him."

Blunston raised his hat and turned abruptly down the street.

"I'll see what I can do," he told her as he left.

## VI

After an uncomfortable night at the Hotel Americus, for staying at which his cousins were properly affronted, he called Washington by telephone and learned that the rule concerning accredited war-correspondents' messengers had been suspended.

He went over to the old house and sat, for a long time, under the Yellow Spanish cherry-tree, where his cousins could

not see him. Once he took from a pocket his copy of yesterday's *Spy* and studied carefully the account of the fire and the note of Annie Drumbaugh's birthday-party. He thought of years ago and of last night, and though he saw no reason for altering his opinion that Sarah Tollens must forever remain Sarah Brown—as, indeed, there was none—he saw with equal clarity his responsibility therefor. Then he walked over to the *Spy* office.

Andy was alone. The boy was sprawled over a littered table, his red head close to a pile of pulp-paper; he was coatless, and his shirt-sleeves were held up by a pair of contrivances of pink elastic that looked like a woman's garters.

"Andy," said Blunston, and he said the name without an effort.

The boy jumped up. A joyful grin bisected his face.

"I want you to come out with me," the elder man explained, "for a walk."

Andy cast a troubled eye at his manuscript:

"I'm just writing a local; I'm afraid I can't leave right away."

"I'll fix it with the colonel," said Blunston. "That story of the surprise-party, never do it again. . . ."

Andy's eyes were large.

"But I meant to tell you last night," he said: "that's the way they like it."

". . . going to be another 'they,'" said Blunston. "The fire-story was you. . . . Of course, your literary ideals are all wrong, but I believe I can teach. . . . Never mind about a week's notice. . . . You won't have to write any more locals unless you don't . . ."

Andy began to tremble:

"You're going to take me?"

"No. Take you for a walk. . . . Come on."

Andy, struggling into his coat, amazedly followed Blunston into Elm Avenue. They strode up the hill.

Minnie Taylor was coming down it. On her head she carried her father's last week's earnings in the shape of a new hat, terribly and wonderfully made. She was still angry at Andy

for wanting to go to war when she preferred his attentions from a close corner, so she began to harden her pretty plump face and turned up her pert nose; but, when she saw him in the company of a stranger in uniform, her manner shifted.

"Hello, Andy," she said. She slowed her walk just enough to make it proper for him to stop and present his friend, yet not enough to make it certain that this was what she desired.

"Hello, Minnie," said Andy. He bowed with an air perhaps tinged by a new superiority and, still with that air, passed on.

"I have to be personal," said Blunston when, in silence, they had gone a dozen paces. "That, for instance . . ." A jerk of his head indicated the back of the discomfited Minnie. "Er—any love-affairs, or . . .?"

"Not on your life," Andy declared. But he had a conscience; it produced a hurried qualification: "Of course, I like Minnie—that girl who just passed—but we're on the outs now."

"Why?"

"She—well, she doesn't understand what a man's duties are in war-time."

"Oh," said Blunston. His quiet glimpse of her had impressed him with the fact that Minnie, like most pretty women of brief understanding, understood at least what she wanted. "You meant to marry . . . You thought of that? I have to ask. . . ."

Andy blushed. He dared not guess what all this was leading up to, but the priest must answer the bishop, and the reporter must not deny the war-correspondent. He had never admired Blunston's news-articles so much as those of Owen Evans, but he admitted Blunston's greatness.

"I might," he conscientiously admitted, "but it'd all be long from now. There's my mother, you see. And besides"—his determined purpose was uppermost—"I've got to get to this war somehow."

This purpose *was* uppermost. That, Blunston reflected, was to be considered.

"About your mother . . . If you went . . ."

"If you took me?"



"If you went away."

The boy was ready there. Of course, he would worry: his mother was not the sort to do well alone in the world. But he wouldn't worry over finances. Kepler, the other reporter, would board at the Brown house, and Andy had another boarder in view, with a third in the offing. Then—Mrs. Brown had never considered applying for it until Andy, volunteering for the army, had bethought himself of it, had looked the matter up and, as he said, "put it through"—there was her pension as a Spanish-American War widow.

Blunston turned away from that. They had gone into one of the quieter streets, and there the older man directed, with some skill, Andy's talk to his chosen work.

A half-hour's conversation sufficed. The boy was on fire with his passion: he wanted to help win the war!

"And it *would* help, wouldn't it, Mr. Blunston? To be a war-correspondent's messenger, I mean. I don't mean that's not a lot for me to get, but I mean—I mean, since I can't fight, it would be kind of helping the big men like you with the—what do you call them?—Lines of communication?—between the folks at home and the boys over there."

Blunston said yes.

"Just what does a messenger do, Mr. Blunston?"

That he wanted to be a correspondent's messenger before he knew the nature of a messenger's duties: this, to the correspondent, was one of the highest proofs of Andy's ability.

Blunston stopped. He fronted the boy, put his hands on Andy's shoulders, looked him hard in the eyes. Andy returned the gaze, questioning, hoping, but unquavering.

"You're sure?" said Blunston.

"Of myself?" Blunston noted that Andy had now perfectly acquired his mother's trick of finishing the elder man's sentences. "Oh, yes, sir—I mean: 'oh, yes!'"

They were silent for a moment, eyes on eyes. Then:

"It's rough."

"I can stand that."

"Dull. . . ."

"I don't mind."

"Dangerous. . . ."

"I know."

"You've got to want to do your duty . . . to be a soldier . . . to help your papers' public . . . the American people . . . your country, more than anything else . . . than comfort, promotion, life . . ."

Blunston's face was very grave; Andy's was as it had been in the radiance from the doorway of his home last night.

"I will," he said: "I do."

It was in the nature of an oath.

Blunston's hands gripped Andy's shoulders, then dropped.

"Now go away," he said. "I'll see you at your house at six o'clock."

## VII

Blunston's contract with his newspapers was not for any cabled reports; for immediate news they were depending on the large news-services. Blunston was to send descriptive material by post—descriptive material of the sort with which the crowded wires could not well be burdened. He went now, however, to the telephone-booth at the hotel and, for several hours, annoyed the commercial travelers by preempting the telephone for long-distance calls.

Then he went to Lawyer Dickey's office.

"The key to the old house," he said. . . .

He was going to live in the old house.

He was going to resign his dearest ambition. He was going to teach Andy as much about journalism as it was possible to teach him in such time as remained. He was even going to make a compromise with veracity. The syndicate could not afford to provide him with an assistant, the War Department would not let him have a messenger; but the State Department would issue Andy a passport, and the adjutant-general would withdraw the credentials given to Andrew Blunston and issue them to Andrew Brown.

For reasons that he did not altogether care to go into, Blunston was making his great sacrifice. Andy was to go to France—a war-correspondent.

Andy was to be told that Blunston's hard work abroad had worn him out and that he was too ill to return to France. Andy was to address all his manuscripts to Blunston, who would rewrite them and transmit them to their destination. In order to avoid local gossip, the proposed service to Philadelphia and New York papers was to be dropped, so that nobody in Americus would wonder how a man resident there could be writing from the Western Front. It was all, when it came to the doing, immensely simple.

A casuist might, of course, have raised objections, but Blunston found himself quite void of casuistry. Andy did not want the fame of signing what he wrote—did not yet deserve it. There was a larger debt to be satisfied than any of mere literal honesty: there was an inherited judgment-note that the new generation held against the old.

Andy, painful as it may be to record this, bowed to his superior's decision upon the point of professional ethics. He accepted it, to be frank, with sheer joy. He was still somewhat timid about his abilities, and he was genuinely sorry that ill-health had overtaken Blunston; but the joy of youth is ever ready to assume that maturity, having had its fling, pants with anxiety to make way for its successor.

He had prepared himself for an heroic scene of manly brevity and restraint when he should break the news to his mother; but Sarah Brown took it with only a slight tightening of the lines about her mouth.

"You'll be needing extra socks," she said—"warm ones. They say it's cold over there. And I'll knit you a sweater." Before he went, she would bake some of the Dover-cakes that he loved and surreptitiously slip them into the bedding-roll that he already talked of buying.

Everybody else—for he had to tell everybody—seemed delighted, though not so bewildered as Andy, by his good fortune. The girls at the Fashion Emporium clubbed together and presented him with a necktie, which he would be unable to wear under the strangling, straight collar of his uniform, when his uniform came. The Racket-Store clerks gave him a half-dozen cambric handkerchiefs with pink borders. The

Blunston girls' father, who had fought through the Civil War and been in Libby, slapped him on the back and said he wished they could change places. Mrs. Bolingbroke patronized him kindly. Colonel Eskessen was shiningly proud of him and promised to send him the *Spy* regularly. The town expected him to do great things; it said so; it shook his hand.

Everybody, that is, but Minnie.

"I think it's mean of you," she said. "Just risking your life for nothing! Why, you're not even going to fight!" In her china-blue eyes there was the moisture of chagrin.

He was too busy to be disconcerted by Minnie. Although his patron intended to rewrite all that Andy wrote, it was necessary that Andy be taught whatever was possible, and Blunston shrewdly believed in the boy. Sometimes they took a canoe and guided themselves on the rushing currents and between the blue-gray rocks of the river, where the trees of clustering islands met overhead, and landed at one of the islands and studied there. Once they walked into the hills behind the town, where, though the dogwood was no longer in bloom, yet on her dark canopy the chestnut still strung ochre plumes, and wild roses shone among the creeping wintergreen. For hours on end, the veteran dissected the war-correspondence in the New York papers, explained the "lines of the armies," commanded the recruit to write column upon column for immediate destruction, and poured forth scraps of advice perpetually punctuated with the order "Get this in black-and-white."

Came the marvelous morning when the postman delivered a registered envelope containing the coveted "Accredited Correspondent's Pass"—Andy's credentials. It was dated boldly from "War Department, Washington, D. C.":

"The bearer, Mr. Andrew McKinley Brown" (Andy was timid about his middle-name when anybody was around, but here it was, a typewriter having trimly tucked it into a waiting blank space on the printed form)—"Mr. Andrew McKinley Brown, whose photograph and signature are hereto attached, is hereby accredited to the Commanding General,

American Expedition in France, United States Army, with permission to accompany said troops, subject to the Regulations governing Correspondents with Troops in the Field and the orders of the commander of said troops.

"This pass entitles the correspondent to passage on military railways and, when accommodations are available, on Army transports, with the privileges of a commissioned officer. . . ."

The name of the secretary of war was printed below it; it was marked "Official" and signed by the adjutant-general's own hand; and it contained a blank line for the signature of the commanding general to be placed there on Andy's arrival in France.

Lest Washington might change its mind, Andy, with trembling hand, signed immediately at the place reserved for "Correspondent's signature." He went out and had his photograph taken—a most unflattering, shiny photograph—and would not leave the photographer's shop until the print had been made and pasted on the spot designated for its reception.

Andy, who had been thrice to Doncaster for feverish "tryings-on" of his uniform, now donned it immediately and, walking down Elm Avenue, decided never to take it off. It was veritable khaki, and an officer's in everything but the insignia. The buttons bore the American eagle and bound their proud prisoner to the army; around the upper portion of the left sleeve was a green brassard bearing a red C,—which marked him as a real war-correspondent accredited to the A. E. F. Andy felt a throb of patriotism in his very throat, of responsibility to the vast American newspaper-reading public in his pounding heart.

And then—the telegram.

It was not much. It was only "Tuesday, 10 A. M." and the name of some clerk that meant nothing. The day was fixed, even the hour.

## VIII

He went to see Minnie, but Minnie had gone to the annual "outing" of the Four-Leaf Social. Well, it didn't matter! At the *Spy* office, Colonel Eskessen said "God bless you," and Kepler told him he'd make good; and Lawyer Dickey came in—oh, by the merest chance!—and blew his nose.

Blunston was to meet him at the station, go to New York with him, and see him sail. The porter from the Hotel Americus drove up for Andy's bag and bedding-roll and said he wouldn't take any money for the job.

Andy ran up-stairs for a last look at his attic-bedroom, at the thumbed school-books and the other long-treasured volumes in the hanging bookcase; at his precious paints and at the dance-programs strung across the mirror. He had put away childish things.

Then he found himself down-stairs standing in the doorway alone with his mother. He glowed with excited expectancy, but, as he glanced back at the little living-room with its marble-top center-table bearing the family-Bible, at the chandelier he had recently laboriously gilded, which now contrasted too brightly with the worn chairs descended from the days of the Tollenses' glory, at the lambrequined mantelpiece on which stood, beside a new photograph of Andy in uniform, a photograph of Andy in his first baby-clothes—as he looked at these and at the tired face of his mother, something clutched at his soul.

She was standing there, a gaunt figure, whittled thin by the years. There was more gray than he had before noticed in her black hair, more lines in her sallow face.

"Now then, Andy," she said, "don't run any risks you don't need to. I know you'll not shirk any you oughtn't to shirk. Don't worry about me: I'm all right. *I'm* not going to worry about *you* if I can help it, and I'm not as much afraid of those U-boats as some people. Write once a week, and—" she put out her long thin arms awkwardly—"be a good boy."

She had spoken between appreciable pauses. At each pause he wanted to interrupt; first, he wanted to say some of the

fine encouraging things he had thought of for this occasion; next, he wanted just to say anything that would tell her of that which was clutching at his soul. But he only flung himself into her arms and kissed her and, looking down into her dry eyes, whispered chokingly:

"All right, mother. I love you, mother. Good-by."

Without turning, he ran down the steps and into the street. He heard the cheerful song of a yellow warbler from the garden behind the house. Because she held them back until she had closed the door between them, he did not hear his mother's sobs.

## IX

On his part, Andy found that the pain of farewell, if it did not immediately end, was at least soon suspended. When they are not short, the griefs of youth are only recurrent. He was a boy being pushed toward the goal of his desire: it would be too much to expect that all his thoughts should remain behind him.

He had been in Philadelphia, but to New York this was his first visit. He went about in a daze, overcome by it. Only the consciousness of his uniformed glory kept his head steady. Broadway, Fifth Avenue—all that had been, theretofore, but magic names: "It's simply great," said Andy.

He listened for every word that he could salvage from the colliding voices of passers-by: "An' he said . . . an' then *she* said . . ."—that was Fifth Avenue; "He's wonderful . . . she's an artist . . ."—that was Broadway; "But, my dear, it never *gets* you anywhere"—this was Forty-second Street. At a shop-counter a too-showily dressed girl was proudly calling the attention of her attendant saleswoman to another purchaser, well but quietly garbed: "See that lady over there? Ain't she grand? She's my gentleman friend's wife." Andy observed that, in their peculiar drawl, all the women were talking of men, and all the men of women.

In the taxi-cabs that Blunston shoved him into and out of, beside the counters on which his cicerone rapped for more speedy attention, across the white napery and shining silver

of a roof-garden dinner—a New York dinner in a New York fairyland roof-garden!—Andy's companion poured out his fragmentary, but continuous, advice.

He had written his charge a score of letters of introduction: to French politicians, American soldiers, cosmopolitan journalists: "Here's one to a Chicago man . . . he's . . . and named McGregor . . . somewhere on a matter of contracts of some sort."

Andy heard and understood and agreed, but his spirits were high with New York and his heart already aboard the waiting transport. He snatched only stray phrases, when he had to be alert if he were to offer satisfactory repartee.

". . . and don't make it a rule to end every sentence with a preposition," said Blunston, "because . . ."

"Is there any rule against ending one with a conjunction?" asked Andy.

Blunston's keen eyes narrowed suspiciously. "How *can* you?"

The laughing boy had his example ready: "Please move your chair away from that electric-fan which you are sitting between me and."

"We shall be late for the theater . . ." said Blunston.

## X

That was a joyful little comedy to which he took his protégé on the eve of Andy's departure for the war. Like most of our American-made comedies, it was very nearly a farce. This was why Blunston—who had seen it twice and knew the players personally and did not like it—had selected it for Andy's vision. He wanted to give the lad a cheerful going. New though a New York theater was to the boy, Blunston's roof-garden talk had succeeded at last in lessening Andy's attention to the things about him and in directing it more and more toward the things ahead. Of these he was thinking when, as they took their far-forward seats and faced a stage set as a drawing-room with French windows opening on a moonlit garden, some one entered from those windows.



The rôle was secondary—unpunctual as Blunston and his friend were, it was still too early to permit the entrance of the star—and the first words spoken were trite enough; but, at the sight of her and the sound of her low voice, Andy's fast-dwindling timidity vanished altogether. He gripped Blunston's arm:

"I can't see my program. Who's that?"

His neighbor looked from one side of the stage to the other. "The man in the check—"

"No, no. That girl!"

"The one at the table? That's Mildred—"

"I don't mean *her*. I mean the—the beautiful one," gulped Andy: "the one that just came on."

He saw a graceful, shining, girlish creature, her glistening hair in a heavy knot above her creamy neck, her eyes like the skies of morning, her lips like berries from the garden whence she came. Radiant, but radiant in the simplicity of things immortal, she moved with the clean-limbed grace of a dryad and spoke with the low clear voice of one among the oak-groves about Tithorea. Awake, he had never before seen such poise; he could not at once believe the reality of what he saw.

"Oh, *that*," Blunston was saying: "that's Sylvia Raeburn. She is rather pretty."

Rather pretty! She had come nearer to the footlights, and Andy saw how, for all her rippling hair was golden, her arched eyebrows were well-defined, and how, though her eyes were frank, they were but the wistful surface of a pool too deep for fathoming.

"Southern," said Blunston, ". . . no sign of it in her speech . . . well liked . . . a nice straight sort of person, only never anything but a second . . . satisfactory actress, never a great . . . won't set the North River on . . ."

The rectitude of her body, the health of her soul, were recorded in the clarity of her glance and the unstudied surety of her rare gestures. Andy was very young, and this was a perilous picture of youth for youth to gaze on.

The play progressed. An entr'acte followed. Blunston

drew some lesson from the fact that American readers had seen the news of the doom of Przemyśl before he and the other correspondents, twenty miles away from that city, and the millions of Germany and Austria, so much as guessed that the place was soon to fall. . . .

Then she was in the garden that had before been glimpsed only through the French windows of the drawing-room. She brought to the painted scene the true perfume of lilac and syringa; she inhaled the hot atmosphere of the theater, she gave forth the sweet breath of flowers in the open air. Andy's impression of her came in volleys: her body was harmonious; she had a trick of puckering her beautiful brows that was not a frown from within, but the shadow of a cloud of perplexity, evoked by her childlike wonder at a world less lovely than herself.

Blunston was tired. He hoped that he was doing the right thing in sending Andy abroad: the right thing for that Sarah Tollens who could never be again, for himself and for the something that he had come to see as the most important of all. On the stage, the star was prancing through a boisterous love-scene. Andy's eyes, he noted, were not on her, but they were bright. Blunston hoped that the boy was not thinking too much about Minnie Taylor.

The star had a fall in that boisterous love-scene. She fell over a flower-pot and made a limping exit.

The opening of the next act was Miss Raeburn's. Evening had fallen on the garden; the dryad was as if she had not long since leaped ashore after a plunge in the Cephissus; dew seemed to sparkle on her curling lashes, and there was starlight in her hair.

Between adolescence and maturity lies a period, all too brief, when the individual, still "appareled in celestial light," may try the unknown fires of manhood and not be burned; it is the period when beauty is at once an element in itself and yet more beautiful because of what it expresses. Beauty, the wonder holy and elusive, is just around the next corner. She has left, as you pursue her, a trail of rosebuds; on the light breeze is still the music of her ever-flying feet; a little

nearer, and you will hear her singing that she is youth and wistful gladness, that she is high adventure and lofty duty—that she is Springtime and God.

But Andy was to see no more of Sylvia Raeburn to-night. The manager appeared before the curtain and announced that the boisterous star had sprained her knee and could not go on. The performance must stop.

Blunston, as they filed out, said he was sorry that Andy's enjoyment had been curtailed. Andy scarcely heard him.

Earlier in the day, when they arrived there, the gilt grandiosity of the hotel-entrance had impressed him, the odors of so many Egyptian cigarettes, the fashionably-dressed women that crowded the elevator and powdered their unconcerned noses before its mirrors, the impassive bell-boys and the waiters carrying late breakfast-trays or early cocktails. Now all this left him cold. Then he was going out to help in the war, with War Department credentials that made him almost an officer; now he was going, but with the added inspiration of the vision beautiful.

Blunston came into his room to smoke a pipe before going to bed. He took up the subject of censorship: other things being equal, a correspondent's work depended on his ability to be tactful with the censor; to antagonize the censor for any minor cause or personal quarrel was to end one's usefulness; but if, as there was small chance it would, any difference arose over a vital principle, then an honorable man could but do his duty and face the consequences. Andy remembered it afterward.

That night he dreamed of his modern Jeanne d'Arc and saw her in the likeness of Sylvia Raeburn. He knew it wasn't love he felt: she was too remote for that. Yet he knew it wasn't only adoration. He had always seen his Jeanne as much the Sylvia of this evening, only now the details were clearer. The wonder holy and elusive, the wistful gladness, the high adventure and the lofty duty: in soul and body she was what the historic Jeanne must have been, what to-night's Sylvia must be; as brave as the one, as beautiful as the other, and like the Lily of Quito pure, "*un lis d'une beauté admira-*

ble," which, he had read in the *Lives of the Saints*—for he had read nearly every dusty book in the Americus Public Library—was watered by the blood of Marianne de Jésus.

# XI

Andy met Blunston in the hotel's lobby next morning.

"Why," said the lad, "I hardly knew you: you look so different."

Blunston was in mufti. He smiled wryly.

"I've no more use for a uniform," said he.

He rode with Andy in a taxi to the pier, a Blunston whose weather-beaten face was rather drawn and very thoughtful, yet a Blunston that gave advice, and sometime shyly indirect encouragement, to the last. Andy said next to nothing, but his companion fought the silence that strove to settle upon them.

"It's the people at home you're writing for," he said. "They don't want to know strategy . . . generals . . . but . . . Did I say they want to know what it's all like, even the dull deadly grind of it? . . . If you can do that, it's worth while. These soldiers can't express themselves. But you . . . You're part of a letter-home for the whole army."

And again, apparently apropos of nothing:

"Correspondents' casualties will go up if they give us a just chance, as they should, but never heavy. So far . . . Needham . . . and then Jones on the *Lusitania* . . ."

He put a hand on that shoulder of Andy nearest him and gripped it.

"Democracy," he said: "that's why we're in this war. Keep it in your head and keep faith with it."

The taxi sped down a large street or bumped over a small one. Now they would leap forward, and again come to a jolting halt, all at the command of some traffic-policeman unseen by the occupants of the cab.

They were at the pier-gates. Together they shouldered

Andy's bundles and passed into the resounding shadows of the pier.

The street was crowded with sightseers, roofs of the surrounding warehouses black with them.

"Wonder the mayor doesn't come with a brass-band . . . present a bouquet . . ." grumbled Blunston.

Bales, boxes, a few porters with barrows, officers seeking lost luggage, military-police in khaki, private policemen in gray uniforms, detectives in plain-clothes, customs-house men: into a crowd of these Andy and Blunston plunged. Far ahead were three squares of light out of which three gang-planks rose to the still invisible ship: up there, out of the darkness, shuffled endless lines of brown soldiery.

A port-officer at a high desk demanded Andy's passport, marked it and referred its bearer to an embarkation-officer thirty yards nearer the central gangplank.

"Right in there," that officer said to Andy. "Stand aside, men!" he called to the trudging soldiers. To Blunston he said: "You can't go aboard with him. I'll see that his baggage gets on."

Blunston handed one of the soldiers some money and with it that portion of Andy's impedimenta he had been carrying.

"Andy, never trust the military-arrangements with your luggage, if you can yourself look out for . . . Don't lose sight of that soldier!" He stuffed a package into the pocket of Andy's blouse. "I shan't wait on the pier . . . too dull." He took the boy's hand and pressed it hard. "Remember to cable if you get into any trouble, or need . . . I'll keep you posted about home. Good-by. Good luck."

He pushed Andy into the mounting line of soldiers. When, having slowly climbed the long ascent to the deck, the boy looked back, Blunston had disappeared.

Andy took out the package and opened it. It contained three new one-hundred-dollar bills and a note-book carefully written and indexed in Blunston's precise hand. The book proved to be a record of all the verbal instructions Andy's friend had given him during the past few days; it concluded with this "Envoy":

"Never forget that you have a duty to the army, to the public, to your country. If you happen on any staff-secrets, don't betray them for the sake of a beat. If you happen on something that the public ought to know, don't suppress it for anybody. If you happen on anything of value to your country, remember that that takes precedence of anything else.

"Get the big 'feature' in the first paragraph, then elaborate and end with a bang; don't split infinitives; don't end sentences with prepositions (or conjunctions!) when you can avoid it without strain. Go slow, but don't go to sleep.

"Remember, however much your profession is abused by those outside it or inside, it is a profession to be proud of. In your particular job, leave generals to the cable-services; you are the voice of the man in the ranks. Could you ask better?

"Keep a cool head and a clean heart.

"And God bless you!

"ANDREW BLUNSTON."

The reference to conjunctions showed that the writer had been working on these notes last night, while Andy dreamed.

## XII

That was at ten o'clock in the morning. At five o'clock in the afternoon, the transport sailed.

## CHAPTER III

### HOW ANDY ENTERED DANGERS BEYOND THE DANGER-ZONE; AND OF A FACE AT A CAR-WINDOW

IT WAS with a high head that Andy entered the white-walled room in the rue de Constantine which was the chief censor's office.

Heaps of printed forms and boxes of stationery were piled on the bare floor. A few collapsible chairs stood about. From the top of the single table, Andy was confronted by the soles of a pair of spurred boots.

He hesitated a moment and then stepped forward. Two legs ran out of the boots and down to a tilted chair; up from the chair rose a narrow-chested figure, on the sloping shoulders of which were the insignia of a first-lieutenant.\* He had a cadaverous face; his dark hair was thick, a mass of stiff curly tendrils; his protruding eyes dull. Evidently he had breakfasted well, for he sat picking his teeth in unspeculative calm.

"Good morning," said Andy.

The dental operations were not at once discontinued in favor of conversation. Andy felt the flush that crept over his freckled face.

"I've come to report, sir," he said. "I'm an accredited correspondent."

Very slowly the lieutenant removed his feet from the table. He spat out the latest discoveries of the toothpick, but the pick itself he only shifted to a corner of his thin lips.

"Well," he said, "you're not the only one."

Andy's flush deepened. "My orders," said he, "are to report to the chief censor. That's Major Curtis."

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\* In justice to individual censors, the author wishes to state that the man Garcia is wholly a fictitious character intended only to typify the evils of censorship.

"Oh, you don't have to see him. I'm in charge."

"Very well, Mr. ——"

"Lieutenant Garcia."

Andy drew from its breast-pocket his precious papers.

"Here are my credentials, Mr. Garcia."

"Lieutenant Garcia," that officer corrected.

"I'm sorry," said Andy; he was ashamed of his mistake. "I thought lieutenants were called Mister."

"Not in the A. E. F. they're not," Garcia responded. He accorded Andy's treasure the favor of a cursory glance. "Well," he asked, "what do you want?"—and tossed the paper back to his visitor.

Now Andy was only amazed: "Why, I—the first thing, I guess, is to have these credentials forwarded for the signature of the commanding general. That is the first thing, isn't it?"

Lieutenant Garcia gave the innocent paper another glance, but this time it was a glance of amusement. "Take it away. We're not bothering with those souvenirs from Washington."

Andy picked up his credentials as a boy might lift from a road the body of his pet dog that a scornful motor has killed.

"Then what is the next thing?" he asked. He tried to speak respectfully, but he could not then add to his question the "sir" of the conscious subordinate.

Garcia produced a paper of his own. "This," he said. "It's the correspondent's agreement. You needn't take up my time reading it. It's just a form. Sign it for us to file: that's all you've got to do."

Told not to read it, Andy obeyed. This lieutenant made him feel much younger than he felt when he left Americus. Andy shifted from one foot to the other: "Is that all?"

"Yes. Come here whenever you want a pass to the American camp. We'll send over to the provost marshal's for it. It'll take about a day."

"I thought my credentials—" began Andy.

Garcia made a gesture of impatience. "I've got more trouble with you correspondents than a dog with fleas," he said. "You reporters all think you can come and go around the camp just as you like. Well, take it from me, you can't."



We're no Brand Whitlocks. What we want you fellows to do's to get down there when we're ready for you and write stuff that'll get behind the doughboys—and that'll keep the people back home in a good humor."

"I thought there mightn't be much to write just yet," said Andy.

"Then make it," said Garcia. "Make it, damn it, make it! Look here: The papers of you accredited men have put up a thousand dollars for each of you with the army, and we're using that to pay for your seats in the reporters' automobiles: it's ten dollars a day apiece, and you're charged whether you use the car or don't. I advise you to go down to the camp and get your money's worth."

"Doesn't that thousand go toward our food and lodging down there?" gasped Andy.

"You bet your sweet life it don't. The officers aren't going to have you fellows messing with them. You'll live at the local hotels—and they'll make you pay cash."

Another correspondent, a fat smiling man with bright black eyes, was waiting his turn in the anteroom.

"Just arrived?" asked the smiling man, as Andy, deeply flushing, closed the door between Garcia and himself.

Andy couldn't speak. He nodded.

"Well, I suppose Garcia told you to get behind the doughboys."

Andy nodded again.

"He tells that to every new man," said the stout correspondent. "He's got to: you see, the artillery and aviation don't exist. Did he tell you he'd charge you a ten-spot a day whether you were at the camp or not? He tells us all that. Forget it." The speaker slapped Andy kindly on the back. "Don't take Louis Garcia too hard. He's a squirt."

## II

Andy's French was faulty. There was some confusion about his ticket, and he started incorrectly for the American camp. One day found him getting off the wrong train to

change for the right one at a village vastly different from those in which his country was preparing for its great effort. The name of this village was Mirande-la-Faloise.

Somebody had told him that the Germans had been here, but if that was so, they could not have hurried away; indeed the little place could not have been under fire, for nowhere, except in his home town, had Andy seen anything more peaceful. Twin rows of white cottages, clean and thrifty, bordered the single street down which, during his half-hour's wait, the American sauntered. At the farther end beyond the church with its Gothic tower and medieval clock, there stood a quite formidable house, an old inn that seemed to date from centuries gone by and that displayed for sign the lilies of French royalty; and behind this, long meadows fell away to a shady woodland thick with oaks that must have been full-grown when Gaston conspired with Montmorency and Richelieu wrecked the hopes of "Monsieur le Grand." Andy, though he had read a little of those events, looked, rather, with a sort of homesickness at the fertile fields that, divided and subdivided, stretched beyond the Inn of the Lilies. The perfumed air sighed contentment; a little creek, purling through the meadows, sang a cradle-song. The only signs of war were a few British Tommies dozing in shady doorways; but one of these, between naps, told Andy that the street was empty because the population, which had fled before the enemy, was as yet forbidden to return.

Mirande-la-Faloise: Andy liked the name. He liked the place; he thought that he would remember it.

### III

On the evening of his arrival at one of those villages in the broad stretch of country called the American camp, Andy, making busy notes by candlelight, felt that he had seen more than he could ever remember and much more than, when he returned to Paris—for residence at the camp was impossible so long as the promise of food and lodging was not kept—he could ever write.

There was the series of villages, all alike. Crooked streets full of mud when it rained, and of dust when it didn't. Groups of American soldiers playing with French children; others in the high fever of the newcomer's passion for souvenir-purchasing; rows of decadent cottages. On the doors of the best houses were rude signs:

MAJOR POMEROY,  
CAPTAIN SCHULTZ.

On the doors of the stables, which appeared to be mere wings of the houses, were other signs:

SGT. BACOPOULOS  
&  
16 MEN.

Every cottage boasted its elbowing manure-pile; the larger the pile, the richer the householder—and there was much vulgar display of wealth. The public fountain was presided over by the statue of a saint, but about the sculptured feet a medical-officer had strung the warning: “Unfit for Drinking Purposes.”

He saw the rigors of training, the apparently spasmodic efforts to teach the new trade of war. Marches, musketry-drills, machine-gun drills, trench-digging, the education in trench-attack and trench-defense: Andy saw it all.

He was living at a village-inn, dirty and expensive. Here, on the first night, as he climbed the rickety stairs to bed, Andy was brought to a pause by a distant rumbling. A soldier was passing him.

“We must be going to have a thunder-storm,” said Andy.

The soldier laughed shortly. "Those are the guns," he said; "you can often hear them if the wind's right."

Dull and far-away the sound was, but without cessation it continued through the night. It invaded Andy's sleep.

Some of the correspondents lived in this inn. They were a little jealous of every newcomer, but Andy's frankness and enthusiasm won his way. "That kid" they called him at first and were inclined to sneer at his "greenness."

Of course, he was to cable nothing, and that was a stigma:

"How much you sending a day?" the newest to the business asked him.

"How do you mean 'how much'?" asked innocent Andy.

"'How do I mean?'" The mimic laughed; one or two of his comrades, standing by, snickered shamefacedly. "I mean how many words are you to cable?"

"None," said Andy.

"Help!" groaned the young veteran. "Here's another journalist."

Nevertheless, they ended by liking him, and affectionately changed "that kid" to "the kid." Andy folded to his breast the wonder of being a war-correspondent for the first time.

He took trips far away from the training-camp to supply-bases in the making, to hospitals and great works that were to be. There, in the words of the men that showed him about, words that the correspondents of the Paris newspapers flung broadcast to their hungry countrymen, he found the spirit of rush and ingenuity and bigness that was America. Peeping through a single large gun and watching its greased spirals vanish in the shining disk of the mouth, he heard an officer say: "We're going to have a thousand of these next month." His first prisoners he saw laying the main of a water-system; he heard that highways were to be widened to accommodate camions four-abreast.

We were to use one hundred and twenty-five miles of four-inch water-pipe. We were erecting a pair of salvage-dépôts to repair clothing, rifles, motorcycles, automobiles, field-glasses, watches, rubber-boots, harness; when completed, they would be the largest in the world. Here, at Bordeaux, a city

was building beside a city: the capacity of the old harbor would be fifty times multiplied, ten times as many ships could be unloaded as formerly and three times as many docked; the eight hundred and seventy switches in the railroad-yard would control two hundred and twenty-five miles of new track there, and from these would be sent forth nine hundred and sixty standardized locomotives and thirty thousand freight-cars from home; to supply purified water, there would be constructed reservoirs that would give six million gallons a day.

"We'll need one hundred and sixty-two million cubic feet of filling to bring the ground of the yards to a proper level," an engineer told Andy. "And just you watch us throw it in."

Of its sort, there would be nothing on earth the size of the clearing-house that was to go up midway along the lines of communication: a mile broad and nearly seven long, four and a half million feet of covered storage capacity and ten million of open; enough war material could be housed there to supply a million men for thirty days. Not far away, there was planned a plant for the mere assemblage of aeroplanes, not even their repairing, where twenty thousand men would be employed.

"Twenty-five thousand planes," said an inspector. "That is what the secretary of war has promised, and he says the factories back home are ahead of schedule."

Could it all really be accomplished, a hovering British correspondent wondered.

"Bet your life it can," said the inspector. "America always starts with an auger, never with a gimlet."

"But sometimes," Ferlet, a thin, excitable French reporter, hazarded, when Andy made shift to translate this statement, "sometimes to start well a gimlet is necessary."

As for Andy, he was drunk with the sense of immensity. What were the slights of officers, what even the drawbacks of the confused training-camp, in such a scale as this on which the great American effort was proceeding?

## IV

Andy had secured a single table in an obscure corner of the general dining-room. He was waited on by a beautiful, petticoated panther, a dark, broad-shouldered, full-bosomed girl that steered with flexuous turns of her body a burdened course through the clutter of servants and officers: she walked like a queen and dominated the entire inn. Andy heard somebody address her as Léonie and ask, in easy French, for a place. He looked up and recognized his friend of the censor's anteroom.

"Well, well," said the new arrival. He came over and shook hands. To Andy's delighted wonder, he said his name was Owen Evans. "I thought I'd run down here for a day or two, but there doesn't seem to be room, even to eat."

Andy scarce dared offer such a dignitary a place opposite him, but he managed it, and Evans was soon gorging. While he gorged, he talked, mostly of his latest grievance. He had been recently to Italy and complained of the Italians' insistence on correspondents securing certificates of registration.

"But our trouble's going to be with our own people," said Evans. "Some day my great-grandson will be flunked at school if he doesn't know stuff that our censors have killed."

He left Evans, who had some writing to do, and passed through the bar, a hall and into the narrow, low-ceilinged room beyond. The shutters were closed, to let no light out and no air in. The place was filled with the glare of lamps and the mixture of fumes from oil and imperfectly digested alcohol. There was a great crowd there, too; not of French peasants, who drink their light wines liberally diluted by water, but men that drank too much liquor and drank it neat; girls, no Delilahs, nor yet one that would have received so much as a glance of pity in a larger village, but women against contaminating contact with whom a cocotte of Paris would have withdrawn her passing skirts. There was no music, however low; no games, however wild; nothing but a few men in uniform, the tilted bottle and the reeking girls.

Andy hurried into the street. He walked through the village and down the long road beyond.

Moonlight—"Somewhere in France." From far away that low thunder which was the guns; over there, beyond those dimly silhouetted hills and across valleys to Andy invisible, iron mouths were vomiting a deafening Niagara of death; here, about him, only that distant rumble hinted just then of war; a train in a tunnel, perhaps; breakers on a rocky coast. Moonlight, and the straight white road, shining silver under the bordering rows of Lombardy poplars; behind him, the tiny thatched hamlet.

In a field a few steps off that road, rose a big black building with a peaked roof. Andy went into it.

It was amazingly full of men—men at tables, writing letters; men reading magazines; checker-playing men; but Rembrandt every one, whose faces were lighted by candles planted on rails along the walls. At the farther end a group was gathered about an older man, who played the piano and sang with them.

It was *Old Black Joe*. These men were a bit of the American Army, and this hut a bit of the American Y. M. C. A.

In a quiet room at the back of the hut, an Association-worker, who had been teaching French to a class of American soldiers, was now teaching them French history. In a corner, behind a counter, another worker was serving the canteen. The bulletin-board announced a track-meet for the next day and a baseball game for the day to follow; there was to be a variety-show on Saturday. Close beside the bulletin-board hung a large placard with this staring legend:

YOU PROMISED MOTHER A LETTER:  
WRITE IT NOW!

The hut had been full when Andy entered it. Before he left, it was overflowing. Soldiers hung in at the windows. Some failed to force an entrance through their comrades at the door or even to squeeze a head among the heads that crowded the window-sills; they had to go away.

## V.

He had feared that the task of chronicling the American endeavor in France would numb his fingers before ever he sat down to his little portable typewriter; yet no sooner was he in Paris, and in his green-curtained attic-workroom—Blunston had reengaged by cable his own old headquarters in the Palais Royal for his protégé—than he fell upon his work and found his enthusiasm performing it. The disorder of his impressions, which, it had occurred to him, might be the reflection of a disorder among the things whence they were derived—that was gone, and order obtained: so, he said, would chaos cease in our spheres of military activity. Andy wrote.

He stopped only because a trick of his fancy bade him open his bedding-roll, which he had not opened on the transport. He found there and ate the Dover-cakes that were very stale, but that he must be able truthfully to tell his mother he had eaten.

His mind whirled back to the camp and all he had seen. He started writing again. The people at home hadn't the faintest idea of what stupendous things were in progress!

He drew up this list, and elaborated:

### THE AMERICAN MILITARY EFFORT WILL CONSTRUCT:

The biggest staff training-school  
 The biggest system of military-  
     equipment warehouses  
 The biggest military seaport base  
 The biggest base hospital  
 The biggest locomotive round house  
 The biggest field bakery system  
 The biggest automobile storagehouse  
 The biggest gasoline storage plant  
 The biggest cold storage plant  
 The biggest junk shop  
 The (next to the) biggest aviator  
     training camp

IN THE WORLD!



It was afternoon when he began. He stopped once to light his lamp and once to fill it before he had finished. Sometime during his work there came something that sounded like the shriek of the transport's whistle; later there were crashes in the street that seemed to his subconsciousness bumping coal-cars when a train was being inexpertly "made-up" in the Americus railroad-yards. As, at last, he finished, he heard the call of a bugle, ringing fresh, singularly joyous.

Later, he learned that this was the *berloque*, the "All Clear" signal. He had written through an air-raid.

## VI

From his workshop window, Andy could see the length of the historic gardens of the Palais Royal. Children sailing their toy-boats in the pool of the fountain; old men and young *blessés* dozing on the benches under the sun-filtering trees; lovers lunching at Véfour's below the merry sounds of military wedding-parties in the *grandes salles* and strolling arm-in-arm along the pillared *galéries*. He revelled in the repetition of names concerning the history of which his knowledge was the haziest. Richelieu had begun the buildings as the Palais-Cardinal, died there and left them to the thirteenth Louis; Anne of Austria—Andy knew his *Three Musketeers*—lived in them, and he that was to be the *grand monarque* and his unhappy brother; the great Mansart, to whom all Paris is a monument, enlarged the place, and in Mansart's halls the Regent held his scandalous revels. Here John Law blew the Mississippi Bubble; Mirabeau knew the Palais Royal with Madame Nahra; while the gamesters won and lost in its *salles de jeu*, Philippe Egalité wooed, above stairs, the Comtesse de Buffon or the English Mrs. Elliott; Lamartine must here have nursed his tenderness for Elvire the creole.

There were evenings when the moonlight brought to Andy visions of a Jeanne d'Arc whose hair gleamed and whose eyes were starry waters too deep for fathoming. There was

one evening on which this inceptor in letters even attempted poetry and began:

When all that hair is turning gray  
Which now is Tuscan gold,  
When faint asciculations say  
That you are growing old—

He never went on with it: he couldn't. He wanted to make some use of "asciculations" because he had just that day discovered the word.

Yet this night his sleep conjured the vision that his pen could not ordain. She was standing between the green hangings of the window with the moon full upon her; it gleamed from her corselet, it shone on her casque and on the tendrils of her yellow hair that, at her temples, escaped below the vizor; reflected from the curtains, it gave her face the appearance of a face chiseled out of ice.

She did not speak, but Andy conceived himself possessed of a reckless eloquence. Feverishly convinced, he voiced the meter of the heartbeats that he could feel at his tongue's tip and in his finger-ends. The sense of miracle subjugated him. He wanted to ask her what she would of him, but what he said was that in the crystal of her soul he saw all innocence and sweetness and truth. With unstudied surety, she extended toward him a hand that was like moonshine upon water. He wondered if he would dare to kiss it; he felt that he would count life well lost were death the price of such homage-giving. He knelt to kiss her hand, reverently—she looked at him and beyond him with a slight contraction of the dusky lashes that was not a frown, but the faintest shadow of a cloud of perplexity as at the half-realized spectacle, and wholly unbelievable, of a world less lovely than herself; she looked beyond him thus; and then, still silent, before his lips had touched her hand, she dissolved into the ancient moonlight.

The lad that dreamed such things was freckled, cheerful Andy. Andrew McKinley Brown. Andy, the son of Sarah, late reporter for the *Americus, Pa., Daily Spy!*

He had seen notable people, had eaten luncheon—at the next to the last of six tables, to be sure, but as a guest, and no mere chronicler—at the Hotel Palais d'Orsay, had been to teas in a one-button afternoon coat that he had to buy at a Parisian tailor's, and to dinners in evening-clothes. He was taking French lessons; whole Gallic phrases came trippingly from his tongue. He had seen all of Paris except that side which Blunston and Colonel Eskessen and all the people back home—including his mother, had she known of its existence—would not have wanted him to see.

The autumn was approaching. It came on stealthily. It played its hand like an expert whist-player that knows enough tricks will certainly be his if only he makes the proper leads. As it came on, so, Andy said, would come forward the might of America.

He was confirmed in this by some of the phrases in a chance conversation with an officer of the *Chasseurs d'Alpins*, whom he met at a diplomatic *déjeuner*.

"What do you think of our men?" asked Andy. "Really, I mean," he hastened to add. "I won't publish it; I just want to know."

Andy's honest brown eyes and smiling face could generally gain him a Frenchman's confidence, but this black-bearded Frenchman with the cross of the Legion of Honor on his coat, although he was fresh from instructing American troops, had little that he cared to conceal.

"They are almost as good as our own men," said he. "Your private soldier is quick to learn, and lean and hard and, oh, very serious! I believe that you must all take your sports like the English; and this business of fighting, you set about it as seriously as your men of Wall Street go about their gambling."

"And what about our officers?" urged Andy.

"Ah," he said, "there is so much more to learn for an officer than for a simple soldier. But I am glad for them both that you will have the Grand Review to-morrow."

## VII

He had been at the camp yesterday and there met officers of the American Army's press-division; it was to be expected that they must tell any correspondent in good standing of an event that would interest the public at home; but none of them had mentioned the review. This morning, in Paris, Andy, when he returned the pass that he had taken to camp, had had to see Lieutenant Garcia; Garcia had made no mention of the review.

Could the French officer be mistaken? A general review of the A. E. F. might indicate that the staff was thinking, six months after it went to war, of going to fight. In any case, a grand review would be news, and Andy must lose no chance of describing it.

He looked at his watch. The last train toward the American camp left in an hour. He bolted from the *déjeuner* forthwith and plunged into the nearest *Métro* station. He was bound for the Hotel Ste. Anne, whither the censorship offices had been removed, in order to secure a pass at once.

He stood on the subway-platform, stamping impatiently. The afternoon crowd was beginning to go homeward, and the station was filled. It seemed to Andy that he had to wait an unconscionable time.

Came an approaching roar. He leaned over the edge of the platform: the train that was coming was bound the wrong way.

It banged into the station. Across the track-bottomed chasm that intervened between that train and him, Andy hurled his anger.

He saw a crowd push aboard. The train began to pull away. It gained speed. Window after lighted window passed before his flaming eyes. At one he caught sight of a person looking across the narrow chasm.

It was the face of a girl—of a superb creature whose glistening hair was drawn into heavy coils above her creamy neck, whose eyes were like the skies of morning and whose lips were like bitter berries. The thing happened so quickly

that Andy's expression had not changed from that of impotent anger at the fact of this not being his train. The direct, clear-eyed gaze of the girl seemed to see this. Utterly unconscious of herself, she smiled. The train shot ahead. Some inward perplexity asserted itself: the girl's even brows puckered, not into a frown, but as if in the shadow of a recurrent cloud.

The train was gulped by the tunnel.

Andy wheeled, fought his way through the crowd toward the subway's exit: that girl was Sylvia Raeburn. It couldn't be, but it was.

Andy madly resolved to get a taxi to the next station down the line. What were all these dolts in his path that they seemed blind to the vision vouchsafed him? He would overtake that train—he—

He stopped. Such a course was impossible. He could not overtake the train. The whirlpool of the city had shown her him and flung her far away. Then there was the review; his duty lay there—and his last chance for the day was now only fifty minutes distant, at the Gare de l'Est.

He was half-way up the exit steps. He turned back.

He went to the Hotel Ste. Anne. Nobody was there but a military-clerk on the desk before whom lay a wire-basket. Andy saw in that basket the pass he had that morning returned. It had not yet been handed over to the provost-marshal's office for cancellation.

"I want this," said Andy. "It was a mistake, my turning it in this morning."

Before the clerk could determine whether or not it was his part to protest, Andy and the pass had left the hotel together.

## CHAPTER IV

OF A GRACIOUS GRAFTER; OF A FRENCH MAID AND A DRAFTED PRO-GERMAN, AND OF TWO PERSONS UNDER A PARISIAN MOON; YET, WITHAL, OF THE ORDER AND DISORDER OF WAR

AT FIRST his tour along the corridors of the Express left him with the belief that every carriage was full. French officers, American Red Cross workers and Y. M. C. A. secretaries seemed to occupy all the space. Then, as Andy retraced his steps, he came upon a compartment that offered some small hope. There were in it four men wearing the brilliant insignia of the *etat-majeur*, one civilian and the one civilian's huge suit-case. The civilian filled a seat by the window and bulged over it; the suit-case filled the seat beside him and bulged over that.

Andy resolved to have the suit-case placed on the overhead rack, where it belonged, and to take for his own the seat it now occupied. He entered the carriage.

Although the day was warm, the squat figure of the civilian was swathed to its waist in a bright plaid steamer-rug. A heavy overcoat rose above the rug. Two plump gloved hands, coming out of fur-edged sleeves, held an old copy of the *New York Times* before the face, and above the newspaper Andy could see only a thicket of gray hair surmounted by a gay tweed cap.

"May I have this seat?" asked Andy: the man must be a fellow-countryman.

The civilian's grotesquely short arms drew the *New York Times* toward his lap, leaving free to Andy's view hazel eyes overtopping dark pouches of fat, an aquiline nose, a little gray mustache that failed to hide a rosebud mouth, and a placid double chin. There was something about the man that the boy, generally so ready to like everybody, at first disliked.

This body wore its clothes not easily, but blatantly; it was too comfortable, too sleek, and it seemed only a body. The question flashed through Andy: Would he ever grow to be like that? Would he some day become round and placid and material? Was life, as this personality proclaimed it, nothing but a satisfied progress away from the star of youth?

"Thank God, an American!" ejaculated the comfortable traveler. Most high voices are thin; this one was corpulent. Its relief, moreover, was so sincere that Andy softened.

He acknowledged his nationality and repeated his question.

"Yes, take the seat," said the little man. "But you'll have to get that suit-case out of the way for yourself: you see, I'm settled."

Andy's strong arms made short work of an excessively heavy piece of luggage. He settled down in its place.

"Where you from?" asked his compatriot.

Andy told him. There had been so many to smile when he mentioned his small town that he now mentioned it defiantly.

"Oh, yes," said the little man. He received the name of Americus quite as if it were Baltimore or San Francisco, and Andy was still more mollified thereby. "That's in Doncaster County, isn't it? I handled a water-company contract in Doncaster about ten years ago."

Andy wanted to talk about Doncaster County—next to speculating as to whether he had been a victim of hallucination in the *Métro*, that was the most interesting subject he could think of—but the little man preferred a topic more immediate. In his discussion of it there developed the fact that he was one of those whose comfort is derived in large measure from contrast with the things about them.

"The quickest way to get rich," said the little man, "is to get on a French train: you'll soon find you'll be better off." He chuckled; he moved his legs contentedly under the plaid rug. "Isn't this country a bluff, though?"

"Why, no," said Andy. "You see—" He looked uneasily at their neighbors.

"Oh, they can't speak English," the little man assured him: "I tried them all first thing they came in. I think this coun-

try's a bluff. It's a nation of advertising-agents; they're all so busy writing prospectuses that nobody's had time to wring the water out of the stock. 'Gay Paree'—we've all heard about that: well, it's about as gay as your mother's funeral. 'The chic French girls': I haven't seen a really fashionably dressed girl since I left Chicago. These people can't help it: they just can't tell the truth. Take the ones that say they can speak English. Can they? They can not. Every time they go to bat, their English dies at second. Don't you ever believe these French head-waiters that say they understand you. I went into the Ritz restaurant last night and asked for sweet-potatoes, and what do you think they brought me? Sugared murphies! They say they've studied geography, and if you tell 'em you were born in Seattle, but went to college in New Haven, they'll ask you if you slept home nights. Have a cigar?"

He uttered the question as if it were a piece with the speech that preceded it. He offered Andy a silver-mounted morocco-case filled with cigars wrapped in tin-foil.

The train was passing whitewashed villages: here a shop and there a cottage, the high walls that shut off the sight of a villa, and beyond that the balconied dwelling of a physician or *avocat* whose name and profession were announced by an oval brass-plate on the front door. Andy, looking across his neighbor, saw not so much these, nor yet the small, symmetrical fields: he was thinking of the *Métro* station and what he had seen there, or seemed to see.

The little man kept on talking. It was to be gathered that he made many patriotic speeches in America, that he had been "over" for some time, that his home was in Chicago, that he was a contractor and a childless widower.

"There's nothing as helpless on earth as the widower that has spent all his married life wondering how his wife'd manage to get along without him if he died first," said the little man. "My wife (bless her soul!) used to say she wondered what kind of a woman I'd marry if she died, and I used to say, 'Some other kind, I guess.' But she wasn't any sooner gone than I knew I couldn't half get on without her and



couldn't get on at all with any other woman. I like the ladies; I like to be polite to 'em—I hate to see a lady stand in a car: that's why I always carry a newspaper—but I'd as soon think of living in Europe for choice as marrying for it."

Something about the man stirred Andy's memory.

"Did you say you were from Chicago?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said the little fellow: "and proud of it. I'm a Chicagoan born and raised. It is in Chicago that there are all 'the loved spots that my infancy knew.' D'you remember the story about the school-teacher? She asked her primary class to make pictures about 'The Old Oaken Bucket'—illustrate it, you know—and one little girl made a circle, three buckets and a line of dots. The kid said the circle was the well; one bucket was the 'oaken bucket,' one was the 'iron-bound bucket' and the last was the 'bucket that hung in the well'; the dots were 'the loved spots that my infancy knew.'"

"Are you a lawyer?" asked Andy.

The little man pulled his gray mustache. "One time," he answered, "I saw a drunk looking at an old tombstone in the graveyard out in Medora—that's down in Macoupin County. The name was worn away; all you could read on the stone was the words, 'A Lawyer and an Honest Man.' I asked the drunk what troubled him. He points to these words and he says: 'I was wonderin' how they come to bury those two fellows in one grave.' No, my son, I'm not a lawyer, but I belong to the same lodge: I'm a contractor. Just now I'm a contractor in aeroplanes."

"Your name's McGregor," said Andy.

"You ring the bell at the first guess: B. Frank McGregor."

"I have a letter to you," said Andy—"in Paris. It's from Andrew Blunston."

"Met him in Manila in 1901," said Mr. McGregor. "I was the only white man that knew Aguinaldo was at Panalan—I'd had a little deal with him once—and I tipped off Blunston. Met him again on the Yalu when I took over a cargo of rifles. Saw him in New York just before I left. He's the best newspaper-man in the world, but he's so honest that the world won't ever find that out."

Mr. McGregor had Andy haul down the big suit-case to look for a snapshot of himself and Blunston, which the boy found under carefully folded and heavily scented piles of silk underwear, silk pajamas and a flowered silk dressing-gown, among which were wrapped bottles of hair-wash and face-paste, boxes of pomade, a mustache-brush and a manicure-set complete to the point of nail-polish. The picture strengthened the change in Andy's feelings: he did not approve of Mr. McGregor, but he admitted that he did not altogether understand him.

On his part, Mr. McGregor took a liking to Andy immediately. "Any friend of Blunston's a friend of mine." He seemed to have some mysterious, but extensive, powers in connection with the A. E. F., and, giving Andy his card with "Hotel Ritz" engraved on it, he commanded him to call "when-ever I can do anything for you—anything in the world."

## II

One of the persons that McGregor knew was Lieutenant Garcia. This censor, though Andy was unaware of it, was aboard the Express, and it was so important for McGregor to see him that he presently moaned his way out of his cerements and sought Garcia in the corridor of another carriage. He lit a cigar without offering one to the lieutenant.

"Any trouble so far?" he demanded.

"Nobody's written a word about aeroplanes yet," Garcia replied.

They leaned against the metal rail before the window. Their tones were low, but not muffled. Anybody observing them would have supposed them discussing the landscape.

"Sure of it?"—this from McGregor, who pulled at his gray mustache.

"I've given orders that any aeroplane story's to be submitted to me." Garcia's Latin face was sullen. "I'm no fool," he said.

"No?" countered McGregor. "You're well disguised then."

The lieutenant flashed him an evil glance. "Don't try that sort of thing on me."

McGregor's responding laugh was sincerely pleasant. "My dear young man, I'll try anything on you that I think'll fit, and if you don't like it, I'll produce that little receipt you signed for the first money I paid you. Meantime, let's be agreeable. I want only my money's worth. If you double-cross anybody else that's bought you, that's their lookout: all I want kept out of the papers is aeroplanes, and I'm not hurting anybody by having it done."

He seemed to feel a need of justification to himself, for, although it was patent that he cared nothing for Garcia's opinion of him, he continued:

"The people back home have to be educated up to these things; they can't bear all the truth all at once. They think they can clean up a war by Saturday night and be home in their slippers reading about the Katzenjammer Kids Sunday morning, while Caruso's singing to 'em out of the victrola. Well, they can't. We're all human; we've got to make mistakes at first and learn by our mistakes, but the people won't realize that, and so we've just got to keep the mistakes quiet till everything's fine again. Now, then, let's get down to business."

They got down to it and remained down for some time. They had reached their station, and McGregor's servant came from his second-class carriage to carry out the big suit-case, before they were ready to arise.

### III

That there was indeed to be a grand review Andy learned as soon as he descended from the train at the outskirts of the American camp.

He carried his gossip to the headquarters of the press-division and there received a grudging confirmation. Then he went to Léonie's inn and dreamed of *Métro* trains and faces at their windows, until dawn.

The sun came up in a golden haze.

The heavy mists of the night were breaking and retreating in a disorderly rout of flying fleeces through the hollows of the lower hills when Andy climbed to the tableland chosen for the maneuver.

It was a countryside teeming with historic memories, but one that, in all its centuries of war and rumors of war, had not once, Andy felt as he looked out at it, seen a race preparing for battle with so high a purpose as that which peopled it now.

There was a far-off sound of trumpets. It drew nearer, and following it, the rhythmic noise of marching feet. Looking from the highest point of the plateau, it was possible to see a spot at which several roads converged, and along these roads was something moving: long lines of men in khaki were moving, men under the peaked American service-hats, and over them, fluttering in the kindly air of France, the Stars and Stripes of America.

Again the flourish of trumpets. The plateau had been ascended; the entire first division, arrived from every point of the compass, had fallen into one great formation, like the multitudinous pieces of a gigantic jig-saw puzzle miraculously and instantaneously solved.

There they were, their bands blazing into an American march, their wide American bayonets gleaming, their keen American faces alight.

Here was the confluence of mighty waters; the young river, after a far and ever quickening journey, was rushing into the bed, at last, of the older and more deliberate stream; long as some of our men had been on this side of the Atlantic, this was the arrival of America in France. That was the meaning to every man present; not forgetting the gymnastics of months past, the army then in the making at home, and the training still here to be completed, one had on this spot visibly demonstrated the beginning of America's part in the World War.

Far up the plateau a little group of officers—some in olive drab and some in blue—had appeared. They walked rapidly toward the advancing columns and came to a pause on the

edge of the improvised parade-ground, half-way down the length of the tableland.

For the first time Andy now noticed that two of the correspondents stationed at the camp had come to that point of vantage which he had gained. To them he turned. His eyes were dancing with excitement; he pointed to one of the reviewing-officers.

"Who's the big fat fellow in red and blue?" he asked.

He was not answered, because just then another order passed along the lines. They had been going forward in column of squads; now the formation was "Company front." Into this they swung. It is the hardest thing to do in all the infantry drill-regulations—that formation of marching men from groups of fours into two long, perfectly straight and perfectly uniform, lines to the company—but they did it. They did it without a break and, so formed, advanced down the field, exactly one hundred and twenty paces to the minute, toward the little group of officers. The lines stiffened. Column after column they came, turning into company-front at the parade-ground's edge, until the whole plateau swarmed with the whole division.

"Eyes—right!"

They went by the reviewing-officers—by the men in khaki and the fat man in red and blue, their forearms at an angle of forty-five degrees, the heads of the rankers snapped sideways.

*"Front!"*

The captains' hands came down, the rankers' heads faced forward again as the reviewing-officers were passed.

At the far end of the plateau, the regiments were drawn up into battalions, and were rapidly inspected; and then, suddenly, that fat man in red and blue was speaking to them, and everybody realized that he was Marshal Joffre.

Andy nearly killed himself in his run across the field to hear that speech, but it was a military speech and therefore brief. It was ended before he arrived.

The entire review was a matter of a relatively few minutes. The great jig-saw puzzle was resolved into its components as

swiftly and as methodically as it had recently been assembled; the wide tableland, the hills and the valleys were apparently empty again.

Andy, who was to take the evening train back to Paris, had several hours before him. He was just turning in at the inn-door when he saw one soldier point him out to another.

"That's him," Andy heard the first one say.

The other strode across to him. The oncoming young fellow was in the thin uniform of all the men about him. His service-hat sat well over eyes of which Andy could catch only a sparkle and above hair of the military cut. To say that his cheeks were bronzed and his shoulders square would be to say but what was descriptive of every soldier within sight, yet there was something in his gait, not yet eradicated by army-training, which reminded Andy of home.

"You're Brown, ain't?" asked the approaching figure.

Modified as the cadence was by contact with speech from other portions of his country, this was still the cadence, and its form was still the form, of the Pennsylvania-Dutch. Andy thrust out a ready hand.

"That's my name."

"I heard you was here. You're from Americus, ain't?"

"You bet you," said Andy.

The large frame of the soldier straightened. Andy could see that his eyes were brown and that his grin was undiluted gladness.

"So'm I. Least I'm Doncaster County, an' I 'tend market still"—the speaker's voice softened—he added: "when I'm home. My name's Shuman."

Andy wrung his hand.

"Chrissly Shuman? I've heard about you. Gee, this is good! When did you come over? The —th Infantry? Where you billeted? Come in and tell me all about yourself, and all about the old town!"

They tramped from one end of that French village to the other and back again, going over topics familiar to them both, recalling scenes that were to both intimate, repeating, for the mere joy of their sound, names that they both knew. "Do you

remember the Blunston house?"—"You know good old Colonel Eskessen—they say he always samples everything in market before he buys any."—"Wouldn't you like to be walking down Elm Avenue now?"

"When did you get a letter?" asked Andy.

"I ain't got my letters a'ready," said Chrissly. "None of us fellows gets letters much. There's somesing wrong about the army mails."

"I've got one," said Andy. He pulled out his last letter from his mother; the mere sight of the postmark was comforting to Chrissly, and to this Andy added by reading extracts that mentioned streets or names that the former farm-boy had seen or heard. "Why, I've got a copy of the *Spy* somewhere," said Andy. He fished it out of an overcoat pocket. "Colonel Eskessen sends it to me regularly, and sometimes I get it."

"We take the *Doncaster New Era* at our house," murmured Chrissly. His hands shook as he received the paper. "Can I read it?"

"You can keep it," said Andy.

"Oh, Brown—you won't mind, still?"

"Sure not. I'm done with it. I tell you what I'll do: I'll send you my copies as fast as I read them."

Big Chrissly choked in his gratitude. After a bit he asked: "You're one o' these here co-respondents, ain't?"

Andy nodded.

"Well, all us fellows we says as you fellows you just look on an' don't have to work an' won't have to fight none, but we all wants to get our names in the papers back home just the samey. I guess you do a pretty good work."

Chrissly himself was here, it seemed, by one of the chances common enough in those days. The Amish are conscientious objectors, and later most of those drafted were set to the more peaceful labor of the army; but, although his parents were members of the Amish faith, this boy had not formally joined the communion when his number was drawn, and a too-scrupulous local draft-board had abided strictly by the blue letter of the existing law. Chrissly had been sent abroad after

comparatively little home training and was thrown, by one of the many chances of this great war, into a regular army regiment filled up by volunteers as the old regulars were gradually removed.

"Oh, yes," said Andy, "I remember now. You *were* Amish. Minnie Taylor used to tell me about you."

There was an alteration in Chrissly at the mention of that name. An unmistakable uneasiness colored his face.

"This here France makes changes in a fellow, Brown," he said. "It makes lots o' sings seem kind o' different to what they used to was."

Andy turned the subject. "They used to say you were a regular pro-German in Americus," he said. "They" stood for Minnie Taylor, but Andy felt it best to employ a deceptive pronoun.

"Well, I was—kind of," Chrissly admitted, "till I got talkin' against rules to some o' these here German prisoners on the quiet still. I soughed the Germans was the same people as us Pennsylvania-Dutch, Brown."

"I see," said Andy.

"Well, they ain't."

"No?" Andy wanted to hear more of this.

"No," said Chrissly. "Why, when I told 'em my name, they says I'd ought fer to spell it 'S-c-h,' an' fer to put anoizzer 'n' on the back end of it still! Some French talk I'm learnin' a'ready, but a Pennsylvania-Dutch man, he can't effer half unerstan' *what* these here German men says, not the commonest words, even. Look at 'horseshoe': that's '*hoofeisa*,' but these here fellows they calls it '*hufeisen*.' Us Dutch, we says 'watch' just like anybody does, but these German fellows says somesing sounds like '*taschen-huhr*,' an' then they goes an' calls a wagon the same as you when we say '*woga*.' Why, a boot's a '*shdiw'l*' wis us an' a '*stiefel*' wis 'em. When they come callin' a ball-game—a '*bolashbela*,' you know, Brown—when they come callin' that a '*ballspiel*,' I gif up. No," he wagged his head, "they ain't the same as us, an' I begin to believe all they says about 'em's true still."

Andy thought there might be something in his new friend's



logic. He branched into his own difficulties with French as indicative that a complete difference in language is less of a bar to mutual appreciation than a merely seeming similarity, and he was illustrating this point by reference to the troubles he had encountered during his first journey to the American camp when he mentioned the village of Mirande-la-Faloise to which his bad French led him on that occasion.

"Mirande-la-Faloise?" Chrissly interrupted; he spoke the name glibly. "Was *you* there still?"

"Yes," said Andy. "You know it, do you?"

"Did you see a big house there, like a hotel yet, wis lilies fer a sign?"

Andy remembered the substantial building very well.

"Why," said Chrissly, "that's her pap's! There she lived all her life till these here Germans they drove efferybody out o' house an' home!"

"Whose father's? Who lived there?"

"The girl what's waitin' on table at the hotel in this wil-lage." Chrissly stopped short. His face became crimson. "Her name's Léonie," he finally added.

Then Andy remembered the waitress that had attended him when he dined here with Evans, the dark full-bosomed girl that had carried herself like a panther and walked as only peasants walk and queens.

#### IV

Chrissly Shuman, too, had found romance in the land of Jeanne d'Arc. Until his regiment was moved to that village in which he subsequently met Andy, he had been as homesick as any of his fellow soldiers; like them, he made his first question of every newcomer, "When do you think the war will be over?"; he frankly wanted to get back to the farm-tasks that had once seemed dull and onerous, and he wanted to see Minnie Taylor. Now he was homesick, but it was homesickness with a difference, it was mollified nostalgia, and distinctly the thought of Minnie was not among its symptoms. This had begun with his first sight of Léonie.

Early in the dusk of a summer evening, the big fellow had happened to be cradling his disease by a stroll that led him past the inn. Under a lamp at its courtyard-door the handsome Léonie, returning from some errand, was in talk with an American soldier obviously the worse for his visit to the tap-room. The soldier had stopped her and was detaining her. He said something that Chrissly could not hear.

Chrissly saw that Léonie's only reply was a ripple of the shoulders, which was her pantherine equivalent of a shrug. Chrissly drew nearer.

Again the soldier spoke.

"*Va-t-en!*" said Léonie.

Chrissly paused uncertainly.

The man that was confronting Léonie bent forward. She picked him up bodily and set him to one side. She started to move on, but the man caught her arm and kissed her.

Her free hand flew to her face to rub away the traces of the insult. She blazed at him.

"*Cochon!*" she stormed. She broke free and raised an open hand for a blow.

Before the blow could descend, Chrissly, the non-resister, had leaped forward. He forestalled the girl's blow by one of his own that landed nicely upon the point of the offending soldier's chin and curled him up in unconsciousness half-way across the muddy street.

"Sank you."

Léonie had employed one of the few English phrases that her service here had taught her. She stood there with her eyes ablaze, her broad bosom heaving, her hands clenched at her sides, a wild thing without fear. Then she turned on Chrissly a gaze friendly and admiring.

"*C'était un bon coup, ça,*" she said. "*C'a été superbe.*"

That was the beginning of Chrissly's acquaintance with Léonie. It was the beginning of his French lessons, too, and of his education in many other ways. It included visits to the inn-kitchen, where Léonie brought him whole suppers, and when, as he tried to eat potatoes with a knife, she insistently thrust a fork into his hands, replying to his "Us

'Amish don't hold by forks for such' with a laughing Gallic volley that told him, plainly enough, that forks were the proper implement and must be employed. It included attempts at conversation in unobserved corners and silent walks about the village well before taps; but it did not include open love-making, because Chrissly had a conscience about Minnie Taylor, and because Léonie had a laughter that kept sentiment on guard. Chrissly thought he had never seen anything like her, and he was right.

Not all of this did he tell Andy, but he told, in his awkward way, enough, and much of the rest Andy was able to surmise.

"So," said Chrissly, "I guess that helped like to get me over bein' pro-German, an' when she tol' me how she was chased out o' her home still, an' what worse sings them German men did in willages they wrecked wisout drivin' the folks out yet, why, I changed my mind efferly ways. I tell you what I'm sinkin' about now when I'm sinkin' about fightin': I'm sinkin' about how they done to her folks in Mirande-la-Falloise, and how it'd be if them fellows effer got to Ameriky an' our farm an' the rose bushes along the walk up to the front-porch."

## V.

Andy was proud of his story. He had tried to write something on which Blunston, who was sending him complimentary letters, would have to do less work than on any manuscript that Andy had yet submitted to him. The boy felt what he had seen on the tableland at the American camp, and he tried to convey his impressions to his reader.

Garcia tossed the manuscript into a wire-basket.

"If it's possible," said Andy, "I'd like that to be censored to-day. You see, the other fellows are cabling."

"It *isn't* possible," said Garcia. "Here," he continued, "turn this pass into the provost-marshal's yourself, will you?"

His clerk had told him of how Andy had recovered the pass. Garcia was angry at what seemed to him a trick.

The doorway to the provost-marshal's office formed a frame for the picture of those persons within it who stood along the rail for registrants, military and civil, and civilian applicants for passes. In the center of the group, Andy saw the erect, pointed ears of a police-dog, its bushy tail drooping, its head close beside the ankles of a girl. The girl was at pause before one of the clerks; she was dressed in a suit of dark blue, or black, and something about her young pose, her unstudied poise, set Andy's heart to pounding.

He traversed the rest of the corridor in three rapid strides.

She was puzzled as to her procedure. She half turned, and the light from a window fell on her pure profile and showed her slightly puckered brows.

She was the girl of the *Métro*: she was Sylvia Raeburn.

Andy, to his utter amazement, found himself abreast of her. He was facing her. Good heavens, what was this he was doing? Was he speaking to her?

He was: he stood there, hat in hand, talking. Never before in his life had he spoken to a girl he did not know. Even now he scarcely knew what he was saying. Hard as it was for him to realize the girl, it was a score of times more difficult for him to realize himself.

"Can I help you?" he heard his own voice saying. It was his own voice, he was almost sure of that, and yet it was so charged with excitement that he would not have sworn to it.

Two or three officers that had been covertly looking at the girl shifted envious glances to Andy.

For the fraction of a second the girl hesitated.

Andy saw a precipice of rebuff and mortification yawning beneath his feet. He sought desperately to save himself.

"You see, I know—I know the ropes here," he stammered. "I'm a correspondent. My name's Brown: Andy—Andrew Brown."

Oh, Paris was a city of miracles! Andy really expected to be repulsed; his eyes and ears were slow to credit what followed, and yet it did happen.

She was putting out a frank hand to him; it was white, but almost boyish: the fingers of Aphrodite and the thumb of

Hermes. She was laughing pleasantly, a low modulated laugh. She was saying:

"Yes, I knew you were somewhere here. I should be awfully grateful if you would help me fill out the blank form that these people have given me."

Andy felt his cheeks turn scarlet as his fingers closed about the cool firm hand. It was all white magic—the hand, the whole episode.

"H-how—how did you know me?" he gasped.

"I didn't until you told me. Some time before I left home, I met Mr. Blunston in New York. I've known *him* for ages. He said he'd come there to see you off."

Well, it was wonderful anyhow! Andy did not know what to say next, but he was saved the effort of making talk by her statement:

"It seemed rather as if *you* knew *me*."

"I did," he said. "I saw you—we saw you—Mr. Blunston and I—at the theater—that was in New York, too—the—it was right before I sailed. He didn't tell me he *knew* you, but of course I remembered you." His laugh was always infectious; she echoed it. She could laugh, he noted, while her blue-gray eyes retained all the wistfulness that he had expected to see in them. "How long have you been here?" he asked.

"Four days."

"Then I saw you almost as soon as you got here!"

That also was wonderful to him. He made it wonderful to her:

"Where—and when?"

"Day before yesterday. In the *Métro*—the subway, you know. I was going down to camp. I knew you right away!"

He became conscious, though because of no apparent aid from her; that he was holding her hand. He dropped it reluctantly, but hurriedly.

"Come over to this desk," he said, "and we'll fill out that form."

She called the dog to follow.

"Isn't he a beauty? He was the mascot of a company of

marines that crossed on our boat; he's a pure-blooded French police-dog—they were 'German' police-dogs before the war—but these men got him in Hayti. We had some theatricals for them, and they insisted on presenting him to me."

They stood by the desk, not attending to the form that the clerk had given her and wholly oblivious of the interested faces around them. Her boyish hand stroked the dog's fur, and the dog gratefully wagged his tail without raising it.

"When I asked them his breed," she said, "they told me he hadn't any; they called him 'just dog.' But I find he really has first-rate points, and he has been '*dressé*': if you gave him your handkerchief to smell and then hid it in the pocket of any man in this room—without his seeing you—and then if you told him to look for it, he would find it in two or three minutes."

The dog was beautiful: anything that was hers would have to be. Andy inquired his name.

"There seems to be some doubt about that," Miss Raeburn told him. "When I asked the marines, they said something that sounded like 'Onawaminthy.' I wanted to know how they spelled it, but they said they didn't. It was their way of pronouncing the name of the place where they found him. I decided to call him Toussaint, but Toussaint has contracted into plain 'Tac.'"

Miss Raeburn remembered the form first. She would not let him see all the answers that she set down—some of the questions must have been intimate—but Andy was permitted to help with others. They showed that she was one of many players who had volunteered to come abroad and make a theatrical tour of the Y. M. C. A. huts throughout France; they showed, too, that she was living in a hotel near l'Etoile.

## VI

He walked there with her. They went up the Avenue de l'Opéra to the Louvre, under the sandsack-protected arch commemorative of Napoleon's Teutonic victories and so through the Tuileries Gardens and across the Place de la Con-

corde. A crimson sun was setting somewhere behind the Trocadéro; through a light mist, risen from the Seine, the gilt dome of the Invalides shone yellow; against the rosy sky the Ferris Wheel stood out in silhouette, and the web-like filaments of the Tour Eiffel wavered upward to the pale zenith.

Andy found it amazingly easy to talk to her. She had a modesty not always to be found among members of her profession; she spoke little of the stage and less of herself, but there glowed from her those soft fires of youth which melted reserve: he told her all about his work; he gave to this new acquaintance shy glimpses of an idealism that he had never knowingly vouchsafed to any friend, save Blunston.

"I'm afraid about my French," she said. "I've never been over before, and I learned all the French I know in New Orleans and at school."

"This is my first trip, too," laughed Andy, "but I don't have any trouble with *my* French; it's the Frenchmen's French that bothers me."

She smiled. He thought her smile entrancingly strange, because, sweet as it was, it left untouched the depths of her eyes.

They had climbed the leafy Champs Elysées, crossed l'Etoile and left the glory of the white Arc upon their right. Miss Raeburn stopped before the entrance to her hotel; the last beams of the sunset lingered in her hair.

"Good night," she said.

She put out her white hand again, and he took it and bent over it.

"Good night," said Andy.

It was the hand to salute which he had dreamed of death as a price not too dear. He hesitated, then bent lower above it. It had the fragrance of blossoms.

Ever so slightly, her fingers tightened upon his. It was her sign of dismissal. He released the hand unknissed, bowed again and turned away toward the Arc de Triomphe.

Soon he saw that he seemed to be treading the pavements of the rue du Faubourg St. Honoré. But he knew that, really, he was walking on the clouds.

## VII

They saw many places together, but liked best the incense-laden hush of the old churches, where Andy always lingered before a newly sculptured Jeanne d'Arc: the echoing quiet of St. Germain-l'Auxerrois, the lofty vaulting of St. Etienne-du-Mont and the ancient nave of St. Germain-des-Prés. There were intimate little luncheons at queer little restaurants, where they regarded themselves as the only aliens entitled to places, and where the lad glowered at any uniformed American or Briton that, entering, cast a casual glance toward Sylvia. In brief, while winter unobservably drew nearer, and the player waited for the arrangements for her work, and while the correspondent wrote articles and letters home every night before turning to bed in his Palais Royal garret, both were happy, and neither, most likely, knew why.

Andy's attitude was one of reverence only: he was altogether unaware that he was perilously progressing toward love-making, and Sylvia, it is to be supposed, set down his shining gaze and often trembling voice to the enthusiasm of a young man sharing the delights of his first Paris with an equally inexperienced traveler from his own country. He would have told you—if he did not, indeed, knock you down for asking an impertinent question—that he was as far beneath the radiant being at his side as any male human being could be, and that he would no more think of saying he loved her than contemplate throwing dice on the high-altar of Notre Dame; his companion would have declared that there was still room for friendship in a very puzzling world.

Anybody familiar with the Americans in France would have seen nothing remarkable in Andy's state of mind—any American, that is, who was of sufficiently philosophic temper to be an observer of his compatriots and not a participant in their mood.

What had happened to Andy was only what had happened, in fact, to most of the men that the war for ideals had brought overseas; it was a schesis of exalta-



tion common to nearly all the arrived volunteers and to many of the conscripts that were to follow, and like other forms of exaltation, it was ready to be turned in any of a dozen ways. Sending him across the ocean and keeping there the light in his eyes and the fire in his heart, it was a spiritual possession, and there was scarcely an American abroad that could not have passed through Andy's especial experience, as hundreds did pass through it, had the opportunity ever so hesitantly offered. Left in America and Americus, such men would have pursued their even ways with their Minnie Taylors, but the meaning of the world-struggle had come to them, and the days of the Minnie Taylors were passing. No Minnie could have symbolized what Sylvia symbolized to Andy; seeing her first as he was about to sail, dreaming of her here and here recovering her actual presence, he found her become to him what his flag, glimpsed always forward, is to the fighting soldier; she was what once was the Cross in the crusaders' skies. Our men in France were again as little children; they believed in all those things in which all men far from the familiar features of home believe—in angels and in fairies, in the simple and the primitive—they were ready to believe in anything: yet that was their secret; not confessed to one another, hidden beneath rough words and homeric laughter, concealed behind grumbling endurance and heroic bravery, it was the reaction of their souls against the too horrible materialism of Bellona.

## VIII

Late one afternoon, Andy, looking for a new restaurant to which to take Sylvia next day, happened into a quiet eating-place—that place was the Restaurant Lapérouse, no less—on the Quai des Grands-Augustins. Passing the humble hall, he was about to climb the stairs when he saw an open doorway to a small private dining-room: there was a table heaped with the impedimenta of an hour's liqueurs and coffee, and before it a somewhat unsteady American officer embracing a slip of a girl.

The laughing girl peeped around the officer: she was swarthy, but brilliantly rouged. Her hat was awry, her black hair tumbled and her black eyes and thin cheeks aflame; her lips were vermilion. She gave the officer a smacking kiss, and then darted by his protesting figure, flicked past Andy and disappeared into the street. For all her merriment, she bore with her, revealed, an old sorrow.

The officer, guffawing, started to follow her. Face to face with Andy, he came to an abrupt stop. He was Lieutenant Garcia.

"Wha' sort o' hell you try'n' raise here?" he thickly demanded.

There was a touch of unhealthy pink in his face.

"I'm not raising any hell," Andy said. "Are you?"

Garcia saw the awkwardness of his position; he attempted mollification.

"Jus' a good time," he said. He smiled ingratiatingly. "Fel's wife clear 'cross ocean has t'enjoy 'self once in a while, don't he?" He fumbled his arm around Andy's shoulder. "An' I'm the candy-kid can pick the peaches, Brownie. I'll put you next, you want to."

Andy drew himself free.

"I'm busy," he said.

"But look here." Garcia stumbled toward him. "Look at these, Brownie." His admiration for his powers of conquest overcame, in the rapidly shifting moods of the drunkard, his fear of exposure. He drew a crumpled packet from his blouse. "Tha' girl's crazy 'bout me—got her crazy 'bout me. Lemme read you letters she sent me when I was Neufchâteau."

"No, thanks," said Andy.

He wanted only to get away. He turned to the door.

His withdrawal reawakened Garcia's fears.

"Keep 't dark, Brownie," he said.

"All right," said Andy.

"Won' do make talk. Of'cer an' gen'man, y'know. You're good fel', Brownie. Mum's word."

"I'll keep it dark," said Andy, and got away.

## CHAPTER V

TELLS OF A LITTLE TOWN THAT GOES TO WAR; OF A WOMAN WITH A RED CROSS; OF A GIRL WITH CHINA-BLUE EYES, AND OF A MOTHER THAT DID NOT HAVE A SERVICE-STAR

BLUNSTON, installed in the old house on Second Street, found at least a certain comfort there. He loved every room: the wide hall, running the width of the building, from which rose the seventeenth century stairway; the prim parlor with its saddle-back chairs; even the austere bedrooms overhead, and the attic, the floor-boards of which had been left unnailed by the builders those two hundred and sixty-odd years ago. He liked to work on the back-porch that had been meant for a front one, where, after he had been wakened by the breakfast-chatter of the sparrows in the ivy around his window, he was sure to hear a red-headed woodpecker tapping at the smokehouse apple-tree and, if he was early enough, to catch sight of the green back and white belly of a tree-swallow.

He did not want to see many people. His cousins he chatted with daily, and he listened to their father's reminiscences of the early 'sixties that, stirred by the present war, were directed at the old soldier's wife. Sarah he called on, because one of the reasons for remaining in Americus was the vague one of "looking after" her; but he knew the Tollens pride too thoroughly to offer any practical assistance, and whether she was not beyond the desire for social help he could not yet determine.

He was seated on the front-porch that used to be a back-porch when Minnie Taylor turned off the street and up the graveled path and stood there ogling him with her china-blue eyes.

"Are you Mr. Blunston?" she asked, and then lowered her eyes. She knew very well, of course, that he was, but she had

been taught that it is not polite to begin a conversation by touching upon that conversation's purpose.

Blunston bowed. "And you are Miss Taylor," he said. He wondered what in the world she was doing here. "Let me get you a chair."

"Isn't it warm?" said Minnie. She fanned her pink face with a damp handkerchief.

He admitted that it was.

"I don't know when I've perspired as much as this summer," his pretty caller continued.

Blunston wanted to say something. The only thing he could think of saying was: "Indeed?"

"No. It's perfectly dreadful. But I guess it's good for the soldiers."

"Yes," said Blunston. "Oh, yes." He was afraid that he might seem rude to her. "The very thing," he said.

Minnie gave him her full face. She smiled; he saw that her dimples were delightful.

"And that ought to hurry things," she said. "At least, I hope it will. I so want us to win soon. I just loathe those Germans, don't you, Mr. Blunston?"

"Quite." Blunston found his hand passing over his weather-beaten face. It was late afternoon; he wondered if the iron-gray stubble showed. But he wondered more what she was here for.

"Still," said Minnie, "I don't think it's going to be long, do you?"

"Long? . . . Oh, the war?"

"Yes, but *I* think it's going to be dreadfully hard for us. They say food will be dear because we've got to send it all over there. And there's hardly any farmers at market any more—hardly any young ones, anyhow. And now even Chrissy Shuman's gone. Did you know Chrissy Shuman, Mr. Blunston?"

"I'm afraid I never . . ."

WHAT was she here for?

"Was it about Mr. Shuman that you wanted to see . . .?"

Minnie's frank laughter discovered good teeth.

"Oh, no, Mr. Blunston. Chrissy's a regular hay-seed. His family's Amish! I—" She drew the toe of one trim shoe inward and made marks with it on the floor of the porch. She watched the toe intently. "I saw in the *Spy* where it said Andy Brown had arrived safe over there." Minnie was blushing!

What Blunston did not know about her in particular was that, finding Andy become a local hero, she wanted to recapture the boy. What he correctly surmised was that her present emotion, whatever else it might be, was sincere. He wished to heaven that it possessed any quality but that. Andy! He had feared something of this sort. Sentimentality; calf-love: of course the relationship had been quite pure; had it been less so, it had, perhaps, been less dangerous. But this—

His consternation held him silent.

"I'd been—well, been meaning to write him, only I wanted to make sure whether he'd want me to, and besides, I didn't know his *address*."

To look at her was one thing, to hear from her was another. Blunston had a terrible vision of what her letters would be: their chronicle of the weather, of the minor happenings of the minor town that Andy would of course be glad to get, of the record of the secretions of Minnie's heart—could it be that Andy would want to hear about *them*? There had long been growing a good deal of the father in Blunston: it assaulted her now:

"If he didn't himself tell you his address . . ."

"You see"—again the diagrams with the boot-toe—"I and Andy were friends. We were real good friends." She looked up quickly—but more quickly down. "We'd been going together for 'most a year." The blush deepened. She visibly struggled, but she brought forth at last the reason of her mission. "You went to New York and all with him. Mr. Blunston, I was wondering if he told you he was mad at me."

Blunston felt only the need of gaining time.

"Because I wasn't there when he came to say good-by," she went on. "It wasn't my fault, really. How was I to know he was going right away? But Andy was always so sensitive."

Blunston looked down into the round, china-blue eyes.

"I think you *might* tell me," said Minnie. "I feel kind of responsible for Andy's being over there, anyhow."

"*You* feel a responsibility?" echoed the amazed Blunston.

"Yes. I'd been kind of uppish with him, and I thought, if I hadn't been, along toward the last, maybe he wouldn't have gone."

Looking at it from one point of view, Blunston could be sorry that he had to say to her what he must. Still, here was no time for weakness: he had to think of the boy.

"From the moment we left here until I saw the last of him at the dock, Andy never once mentioned your name, Miss Taylor."

"Is that right?" asked Minnie. She had risen.

Blunston, rising, bowed assent.

"Poor Andy," Minnie said: "he took it too hard to talk about it. Well," she added, "I guess I must be going."

"I'm sorry . . ."

"And you *were* pretty thick with him?"

"Pretty thick."

"Well," said Minnie, "good afternoon."

He watched her undulating back. She went jauntily. She was a good loser.

Misunderstanding the true inwardness of the situation, Blunston was troubled. Yet he couldn't write to Andy about it, and he wouldn't talk about it to Sarah.

## II

Americus wilted under the late heat; like other towns, it strained its ears to catch each rumor from Washington, its eyes to pierce those heavy mists of man's own making which the War Department hung between the people and the American zone in France. The iron-mills, after long suspension in the days of peace, were working again at full-time; one by one, the local industries were receiving government orders for finished products, and if taxes and the cost of living continued to rise, at least there was more money to

pay the piper, and expenses were always a week behind raises in wages.

Gossip dealt largely with the boys in training. Americus had seen its drafted men march to the station behind the Silver Cornet Band: awkward, but earnest lads, setting out first to the Georgia that seemed almost as far away as France. For that first queer draft-day had come and gone, when suddenly serious men stood in restless groups like men on trial that attend the return of the jury, and waited, before the *Spy* office, for the pasting in the window of the sheets of paper on which cabalistic numbers were scrawled.

"I'm ready enough," had said little Harry Kurtz, as he saw his number go up; "only I'm kind o' worried about my terrier, Fan: she's goin' t'have puppies inside of a month, an' nobody likes Fan at home, 'cept me."

Some of the boys wouldn't "set for their photographs" because of a superstition that most men who were killed had left at home pictures of themselves in uniform. Already in many a window was the placard announcing that "A Man From This Home is in the Service of His Country"; and service-flags began to appear like stars in a cloud-clearing sky.

The Greek bootblack inadvertently inserted in his phonograph an old disk that turned out to contain *I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier*, and the town boycotted him. A German-born minister was heard speaking, on Hickory Street, the language of his native land, and the high-school pupils waited on him and compelled him to display the Stars and Stripes above his doorway. Doctor Dawson, the Episcopal rector, was torn by doubt as to whether, since St. Michael fought the Dragon in Heaven, God's clergy should not now take up material swords against the "old serpent" upon earth, caused a large board to be placed on the wall of St. Paul's just above the font, and had inscribed thereon the names of his flock that were in the army or navy; and pretty Mrs. Bolingbroke organized and vigorously led a series of what she called "Community Sings."

Indeed, Mrs. Bolingbroke took the reins of most of the local war-activities. Things called "drives" were made for the

Y. M. C. A. and afterward for War-Savings Stamps, which that young lady energetically drove. A chicken corn-soup supper for the benefit of the Serbian sufferers Mrs. Ralph G. Bolingbroke directed. She rather tactlessly gave, on prayer-meeting night, a "Subscription Street-Dance and Carnival" for the Soldiers' Library Fund; and the parade of players to a baseball game, arranged to raise money for French orphans, was headed by Mrs. Ralph G. Bolingbroke; but her sacrifice of conservative sentiment was obviously only with the purpose of keeping the town to its straight path of duty.

"We've got to have a headquarters," she informed her husband, on the evening when the idea of a Red Cross chapter occurred to her, and the dimples in her pretty merry face did not blunt the sharpness of her glance. "Why don't you lend us that old brick place opposite the Opera House?"

They were sitting on the porch overlooking their lawn, with its mass of foreign trees and its Victorian statuary separating them well from the passers-by.

To put it across the other, Ralph picked up one long lank leg in both hands: "The Tidd house?"

"'Tisn't the Tidds'. You know well enough it's yours."

"People by that name used to live there. Father always called it the Tidd house."

"Well, will you lend us that? It didn't cost you anything," Mrs. Ralph snapped.

"Father got it from the Tidds for a bad debt, and *they'd* got it by the right of adverse possession."

"I don't care how anybody got it: will you lend it for our Red Cross?"

This was the house which Blunston had noted as displaying one of the marked changes in Americus. It stood in what was now the business-center of the town, among a group of prosperous shops; but Ralph, who could find no tenant that wanted to make his home there, had not thought it wise to remodel and let it as a store: he wanted to sell it and, never receiving what he considered an adequate price—though some of the offers were high—he permitted it to fall into disrepair. His wife, who hated all old things, disliked the Tidd house;



but it had fair-sized rooms with large open fireplaces and would well serve her present purpose.

She got most of the things she wanted in life, and by the means that she got others she got this. Ralph lent the Tidd house, and Mrs. Bolingbroke superintended its overhauling. Within a fortnight, the local chapter of the Red Cross was busily installed. The band stood outside on the opening night and, after Ralph's speech of presentation, played, very well, too, *Juanita*, in subtle honor of the fact that Mrs. Ralph was by way of being a bride.

The chapter, in spite of inevitable drawbacks, prospered. The townswomen responded to Mrs. Bolingbroke's call, as Americus always did respond to calls for service: there was really a good work to be accomplished, and there was a lovely uniform to be donned. Mrs. Ralph's motor-mind, her hearty domination and boundless energy at starting movements, achieved much: these and the uniforms. The necessary humor was supplied by an impulsiveness as quick to anger as to kindness and rising from the same source. A member that touched a chair resented being publicly told to wash her hands before proceeding to roll bandages, and a resignation and a broken friendship resulted. Minnie Taylor wore her uniform out-of-doors, probably because she rightly thought it becoming, and Mrs. Bolingbroke reprimanded her in a manner that made her cry.

Miss Hattie Lloyd severely knitted socks in her own home and sent them to the Tidd house by the little girl that lived next door. She had regarded Mrs. Ralph's married activities as trespass *ab initio*. The first Mrs. Ralph—though dead, poor woman—was the only one Miss Hattie would recognize. Besides, hadn't she known the second Mrs. Ralph's father only too well as a dentist, who had extracted a perfectly good tooth for a decayed one?

### III

From France, Andy's letters, crowding upon one another's heels, showed him in a rapturous delight and in a curiosity,

no less rapt. There were so many "firsts" to record: his first sight of the ocean; his first sight of Paris, his first apprehensions of France. "Just the ocean," he wrote: "I went on deck, and where there'd been the land there was the ocean, and nothing else, all the way to the sky. It's old to you, but it's all new to me. A lieutenant that's censoring letters told me one of the men, a fellow from Kansas, wrote to his mother that 'the ocean is just like Bellows' Creek, only bigger,' and I guess he's about right."

He wanted, later, to know why the French did so many things differently from us, but in some points he found rural France not at issue with Americus. "An army-doctor down at the camp," he said, "had fits because the villages have open drainage—said it was so bad and so French—and when I told him it was American, too, because we had it in my hometown, he had worse fits: he was one of those New York fellows that haven't ever been where there weren't porcelain tubs to every room." Andy, it developed, had always thought of the Grands Boulevards as one street and went searching for it from the Boulevard des Capucines to the Place de la République.

Blunston said to himself that here, at all events, was no lovesickness for Minnie; but there was also no mention of the war. Was Andy entirely carried away by these "firsts"—enjoying them at the expense of his work?

Then came the first article, and it set Blunston's mind at rest. It was so unassuming that it was well done. Blunston thought that it might almost go without rewriting. He changed it, however, to conform with his own style.

#### IV.

Although she had shown it to nobody, and least of all to Blunston—although she would have gone to the rack rather than show it—Sarah, whatever her grief at parting from her boy, had been even prouder of Andy's going to France than of any other event in a career that had always been a source of gratification to her. She secretly liked, too, the reflected

glory of Andy's local distinction in being the first lad from Americus to go to the war. It reached her, to be sure—that reflection—only through her immediate neighbors—for the ultramondinists of the town had always stopped their liking for Andy at Andy; but it had produced a cheering glow in slumbering embers, and the glow had risen to a pale flame when her boy's postcards and letters began to arrive, marked "Passed by Censor" for anybody to see, and dated—by her own son, too!—"Somewhere in France." She saw the service-flags go up in the windows about her little house and wished that she could hang out a service-flag, too; but about this time she began to fear that a flag would make for comment from mothers whose sons were in the ranks, and then, treading on the heels of this doubt, came Mrs. Bolingbroke's organization of a Red Cross chapter and the fact that Sarah was not asked to join it.

There was no reason why she should be asked: for that good work people are supposed to volunteer. Nevertheless, Sarah, in the course of a rare daylight excursion to the shops on Elm Avenue, saw Mrs. Bolingbroke's limousine stop and heard Mrs. Bolingbroke call out an invitation that was phrased like a demand to three shopping housewives whom she audibly knew by name, but with whom she patently could not be socially intimate. People that have been long avoided come to the conclusion that they should be sought: Sarah went home resolved never to join the Red Cross and never again to dream of a service-flag.

It is only in cities that the descent to Avernus is easy; in a small town it is a painful thing to pursue that process which Miss Hattie had spoken of as "coming down in the world." Scarcely had she made it before Sarah Tollens knew her marriage to Phil Brown was a mistake. She would gladly have borne its vicarious effects had its direct cause been worth, but Phil was an outrageous waster and lost little time in proving it. She was relieved when she heard of his death, and yet his death did not relieve her of what his life had done.

Her punishment for the alliance had been immediate and cruel. The consummation of her romance led disillusionment

by the hand, and social obliteration hung upon the skirts of disillusion. There were no post-nuptial calls on the Browns and no invitations. The people she used to know still bowed to her when they passed her on the street, or after service as she left St. Paul's Church, but it was only on the street, or in connection with some church activity that she met them. It was not long before, mistaking embarrassed greetings for intended patronage, she gave up the church.

Years ago—oh, just at the first!—she was wheeling little Andy in his baby-carriage along Hickory Street when one of her former friends met her.

“Why, it's really quite a *nice* baby!”

Into that revelation of her expectations Andy's unlooked-for favors betrayed the well-meaning woman. It told Sarah much.

Instead of conquering the disease by moving to another town, Sarah's pride kept her in Americus. It was, like most, illogical; it could keep her face to her enemies without; it would not save her from deterioration within. She became a seamstress that would not accept work from those best able to pay well for it; she lost her chance of social regeneration; she saved her air of reserve and the appearance of not feeling the pangs of her trouble: her pride, in other words, saved her precisely itself—a doubtful treasure, as one grows older.

Toward Blunston, while continuing to care for him, she had nevertheless nourished a certain resentment. He stood at home in her mind for all the pleasant things that had been denied her; Blunston away from home she would hear of through a casual street-word from Miss Hattie Lloyd, who told others she “never saw her,” yet ever had for Sarah some word of Blunston's material success. She was glad that he was now in Americus, but she did not love him; she liked the friend, yet mistrusted the situation that made his friendship possible.

Andy's blindness to her faults kept him only vaguely conscious of the social decline; seldom seeing the inside of better houses, he did not realize the condition of hers; she never complained, and her continual reserve gave him the impression of a vast strength behind it; he loved her for the best

of all love-reasons: because she loved him. On the other hand, her love for him was the passion of her life; he was all that she had left, and she gave herself unstintingly.

Yet her own reflected glory always came to her as a surprise. On a summer afternoon, the Reverend Doctor Dawson, of St. Paul's, called at her house.

"You seem to have given us up, Mrs. Brown," he said, "but your name was on the books of the church when I came here, and of course I've never removed it. They tell me, too, that Andy used to sing in the choir. Now, we have a service-flag in the church with a star on it for every one of our boys in his country's service, and we have a board on the wall with their names on it. Andy's doing one kind of work for America, and a dangerous work it will be, too. I'm going to put up Andy's star and Andy's name."

Sarah's sallow cheeks became pink.

"I wouldn't," she said.

"I'm going to," said Doctor Dawson.

He did not bring Sarah back to services, but one week-day, seeing the church-door open, she stole inside and stood, a weary, black figure, long looking at that list of names:

IN THEIR COUNTRY'S SERVICE:

ANDREW MCKINLEY BROWN

She wondered which star in the flag that hung overhead was Andy's.

## CHAPTER VI

TAKES ANDY BROWN TO THE TRENCHES; PURSUES LOVE, AND  
PLEDGES FAITH TO A HIGH BUT DIFFICULT CAUSE

ANDY was rising disconsolately from a dinner at the correspondents' inn when he heard a mighty howdydo in the office. He strolled thither.

*Madame la propriétaire*, who had received generals with tranquillity, was reduced to a lump of agitated jelly. Jean, the most ancient of the inn's superannuated supernumeraries, was swaying under the weight of two great handbags slung by a strap across his emaciated shoulders; Raoul, a lad of seventy years, staggered behind him with a big suit-case and a plaid steamer-rug that seemed familiar to Andy; back of Raoul came Georges, aged fourteen, who supported a small toilet-box, and in the shadow of Georges stood an empty-handed American, plainly a servant, who carried himself with a dignity and besides himself carried nothing at all.

"Important?" asked all the maids.

"Of an importance the highest," shrilled *Madame la propriétaire*. "He himself has declared it—and in a telegram, my faith!"

"An American?" asked the maids, fluttering.

"From Washington," said Georges.

"From the president," said Madame, conclusively. "I believe well from M. le Président Vilson."

Out of the rear of the excited group there paced forward a pudgy little man enveloped from ears to heels in a fur-edged, and patently fur-lined overcoat. A fur hat was pulled down over his brows, and Andy knew him at once for his former train-fellow, Mr. B. Frank McGregor, of Chicago.

Andy came to his rescue in the rôle of a welcome interpreter. He saw to it that Mr. McGregor's importance lost nothing through interpretation.

"You'll have dinner with me, young man," said McGregor, after he had shaken Andy's right hand in both of his own.

"I've just had mine," said Andy.

"Then you'll have another," said McGregor.

He was a long time in his bedroom before Andy was summoned to the chamber next door, which McGregor, a French colonel having been dispossessed, had ordered converted into a private dining-room. He came in immaculate (he was all but in evening-clothes, thought Andy) and, when he had expressed his frank opinion of French village-inns, he grew amiable to the point of allowing Andy to forego eating.

"Now, then," he said, as he uncorked a bottle of *vin de marque* and made a face at it (he would not suffer a French waiter to uncork his wine), "you look as if you'd lost your best friend. You know the story about the little boy: his mother asked him if he'd been fighting, and he told her 'No, mama; I've been fought.' What's wrong?"

Andy was so full of his trouble that it easily overflowed. The Americans were in the trenches; that is, a few of them were there for practice-work, and the press-division had that afternoon told him it was not going to issue any correspondents' passes.

"Can't get a pass to the trenches?" repeated McGregor. "Then come along with me."

He was going there. He was down here mapping one of the mysterious back-waters of his deep stream of contract-placing and had decided that he would like a picnic-excursion to the front line.

"You'll go along as my private secretary," he said. "You *are* my private secretary: I appoint you now—for the day."

"They'll never let me go," said Andy.

"Leave it to me." McGregor called for his servant and gave him a card. "Take that over to the press-division's headquarters," he ordered. "Now, Mr. Brown, you needn't be present at the interview, but you needn't worry, either."

There'll be a car ready for us at eight—no, eight's too chilly: at nine-thirty in the morning."

## II

McGregor was depressed by the ruin of the villages close to the front. On the roads there were no peasants and only a few soldiers; the fields were lifeless, now dun-colored, and again retaining some of the recently fallen snow; the sky was gray, black clouds of smoke rising here and there from the horizon-line; and the rattle of their breathlessly charging car drowned other noises. The visitors swung at last into a muddy street running among a clump of battered houses that gathered under the skirts of an old church.

"This is the headquarters town," their military-chauffeur informed them: all military-chauffeurs are talkative persons. "It wasn't shelled while the French held this sector, but our fellows have stirred the Boche up some. We'd better put on our tin hats, I guess."

"This helmet makes my head ache," said McGregor, almost before he had it on.

"You gotta wear it anyhow," the chauffeur told him.

They had pulled up at the edge of the village beside the garden-wall of a château. On the gate was a sign announcing that this château was a general's headquarters. . . .

An explosion nearly tossed them from their seats.

At a short distance down the street the front of a house bellied over the roadway and then fell in a slow cloud of dust. Just at the edge of the dust-cloud a soldier lay very still.

"Good God!" exclaimed McGregor.

Andy said nothing. It was his first shell and his first sight of injury in war. He drew his lips into a tight line. Then he leaped from the car.

"Hi! Don't go out there!" cried McGregor.

Andy hurried to the ruin. The soldier lay in a welter of blood, his face blotted out by it. Andy seated himself in the road—placed the soldier's head in his lap—began to mop



the blood with his handkerchief—began also to call for hospital-orderlies.

There was no alarm sounded. Not until several minutes had passed did the military approach the wounded man. Then an officer came out of the château.

"Where's the litter-squad?" he demanded.

An enlisted man had followed him.

"What's a litter?" asked the enlisted man.

"A stretcher!" shouted the officer. "Where's a stretcher?"

"Hurry," said Andy, "this man will die if you don't hurry!"

A stretcher was found at last. It was in one of the houses, where it had lain behind a door, rolled up. By the time it reached Andy, the man whose head was in the correspondent's lap had given a little shiver and died.

A very white Andy walked back to the car.

"You've got blood all over you!" said McGregor. He was as white as Andy.

"What sort of show is this?" asked Andy. "The town looks as if it were shelled every little while, but they haven't any stretchers ready. Look at the men coming out to see what's happened, and that officer hasn't the sense to order them into the cellars."

"Why?" McGregor half rose. "Do you think there'll be another?"

McGregor dismounted from the car. He held his steamer-rug by one end, but let the other trail in the mud.

"Here," he said, "you take these passes and go ahead if you want to, but I advise you not to. I'm going in here to talk to the general. I want to see him anyway."

### III

The car, now holding only Andy and the chauffeur, ran madly along more muddy roads, the brown water flying out in spreading rays behind them. They came to a slight eminence.

The gray light revealed below a vast semicircle of drab

open country. In each of three directions nothing broke the monotony, save here and there a group of trees that seemed to have been ripped by lightning, a wall of shattered stone like the ruin of some castle worn away by time. The only thing at once remarkable about the landscape was its barrenness; it might have been a slice of the Dakota Bad Lands; but Andy knew that, three years ago, this was all dotted with farms; those ragged trees were a forest then; that single chimney marked the place where a village stood.

The chauffeur pointed to some zigzag yellow lines that resembled clay thrown up by the burrowings of many moles.

"Those," said he, "are our trenches."

Down there, under the ground, were men at war; down there, in a gigantic rabbit-warren, men waited but the sign of command to spring out and deal death—and receive it. As yet, to Andy's unaccustomed eyes, there was not anywhere a token of life, but all the while that landscape teemed with the life that kills.

Out of nowhere something rolled into Andy's vision of the sky—a huge floating sausage. Another and another followed. Broken nets, on which fluttered bits of green rags, lined the roadway, suspended between saplings. They came to an unprotected stretch of road at the entrance to which was a sign:

ATTENTION!

L'Ennemi Vous Voit!

Farther on, under a canopy of intertwined twigs, was a battery perfectly aligned, its day's ammunition tidily piled close by. The car passed a dreary line of walking-wounded hobbling to the rear. Occasional shells splashed earth and fire and iron around them.

When the next elevation was gained, Andy could see the Germans' ridge more clearly than before. He pointed to sparks that flashed there.

"Heliographing?" he wondered.

"German artillery," corrected his companion.

There was a whining and rushing in the vibrating air like the cry of tigers and the flight of antediluvian birds-of-prey. With Andy's ear close to his mouth, the chauffeur roared gossip of the front, but, though his ear was for the speaker, Andy's eyes were bent toward the battle-field. That was No Man's Land down there. In front of twenty miles of already thrice-filled cemetery, there lay an open-air slaughter-house twenty miles long. Overhead, an observation-balloon, tugging querulously at its rope, must have borne an observer, who, glasses at eyes, telephoned his reports to some artillery officer behind the ridge. Toward the close horizon there were those sparkles which marked the firing Boche guns. Andy could scarcely believe that, ahead of him in the German lines and nearer yet to him in the American positions, artillerymen were sweating over blistering guns whose huge projectiles were these, crisscrossing in the sky.

The automobile came to the remnants of a village, scarce a house of which now rose higher than a single story. It was quieter here. The chauffeur pointed to an old barn.

"We'll get out," said he. "An American communication-trench runs out o' the back door of that barn. It's a hell of a mess—the whole business."

He said that the French had been justified in choosing as their headquarters the château that McGregor had entered, because of the tacit understanding which reduced bombardments to a minimum during the French occupation of this sector, but he scoffed at our folly in using the same headquarters. The Germans were on a hill overlooking it, yet we had not constructed a dug-out or piled two sandbags together.

"It's an easy mark and a peach of a gas-trap," said the chauffeur. "There are a lot of casualties, too, and it's all our own fault for not taking decent care."

As he piloted Andy through the barn, he went on explaining:

"The Algerians used to hold these trenches, but all we've done in the way of sanitation's to sprinkle around a little chloride of lime. And there are eight lines of wire there for communication with headquarters, and we've left 'em all uncovered: one lucky shell'd ruin the lot. What do you know about that?"

#### IV.

Andy saw that he was crouching in a long pit that ended in sharp turns, one to the right, the other to the left. The pit was so narrow that he could not stretch his arms to their full length; it was higher than his head and rose for a few feet above the surface of the earth in a hodge-podge pile of sandbags and tin cans. Rotting revetments supported the oozing sides, and there was a step along the forward side on which a man might stand to shoot. Some broken boards ran down the bottom; they splashed up sprays of noisome liquid if the occupant trod on them; if he did not tread on them, he sank ankle-deep in abominations.

Two shivering American soldiers were in sight. Both men were so caked with mud that it was difficult to tell where their blouses ended and their throats began. One of these soldiers leaned from the firing-step and peered through a bottomless tin can placed in the rampart to give a view of the land between the opposing lines—Andy noted that this man's boots were broken and that his toes protruded—the other squatted in the ooze and, having tossed his boots away, nursed his swollen feet, on which only the rags of stockings remained.

"You look cold," Andy yelled against the roaring guns.

The man on the step did not remove his eyes from their duty; the man in the muck looked up with eyes that were like holes burnt in a blanket.

"Cold?" he repeated.

His overcoat had lost a button. Through the opening, Andy could see the blouse of a summer uniform.

"Do they make you wear those cotton things?" called Andy.  
"There ain't no others come over yet."

The horror of the place, and of the plight of the men in it, bit into Andy's soul. He saw the filth in which he perforce wallowed; his nostrils, even while thick with the effluvia from explosives, could not bar the stench; he received the evidence that here, where there could be no decency or reserve not daily violated, all those delicacies which every man possesses, and tries to pretend he lacks, rose in sickened revolt.

"I bet you'll be glad when the relief comes," he said.

He did not shout this; but the man in the muck must have read his lips, as men learn soon to read lips in modern battle. That man leaped to his frost-bitten feet. Through his mask of dirt, his face burned.

"Don't you run away with any idea like that!" he thundered. "We came here to fight, an' there's not a fellow but what wants to stick till he gets a go at it!"

The other man twitched Andy's sleeve.

"Want to take a look?" he inquired.

## V

On the way back, they passed a little group of prisoners, captured while venturing too far on a reconnaissance the night before. They had been for almost a month in the trenches and for three days of that time cut off, by American fire, from all food and supplies. They were more like the beasts of the mountain-caves than men.

At a first-aid station—one of the rough-and-ready dressing-stations nearest the firing-line—wounded Americans were feeding these captives cigarettes; when the captive had been shot in the hands, the American even placed the cigarette between the Teutonic lips and applied a match to it.

These Americans were formed voluntarily in a long line before the first-aid station; there was no distinction of rank; the rule was first come, first served.

One there was who seemed to Andy especially in need of

attention. He swayed from dizziness, and blood dripped from the bandaged bulk of his left hand.

Andy looked about for help. He said to the wounded man: "Come out of line, and I'll get you attended to."

"I'll wait my turn, thank you," the wounded man responded.

He was a colonel, and there were only enlisted men ahead of him.

## VI

"Well," said Andy, as he rejoined the chauffeur, "I've seen a battle, anyhow."

"Battle?" gaped the chauffeur. "What you talkin' about—battle? This has been what they call a 'quiet day: nothin' to report.' If it hadn't been goin' to be, d'you suppose they'd've left visitors out here?"

A roar of artillery interrupted him.

So the day that had begun with death and the pounding of guns ended with the pounding of guns and death. Tomorrow would so begin and so end. And another to-morrow and another.

## VII

Yet Andy felt there was something wrong. The immensity of our projects had dazzled him a few months ago. Now, though his faith in the ultimate triumph of American democratic effort was not lessened, he felt that there were at work, somewhere in democratic America, forces that would exploit patriotism for the increase of their own power.

## VIII

In Paris, precisely at seven P. M., at the corner of the rue des Petits Champs and the Avenue de l'Opéra, Sylvia, with outstretched hand and Tac at her heels, came into the light that fell from a shop-window. She reminded Andy of a gray-eyed child just released from school.

"You're back," she said: "I'm glad."

She wore a short skirt. About her slim neck fur nestled, and, between its darkness and that of her fur turban, golden tendrils clustered about her face.

"So am I," said blushing Andy. Tac sniffed at him, wagged a low but increasingly certain tail, received the hearty pat of recognition. "But I hear you're going away."

"Just for a little while." She fell into springing step beside him. "That doesn't matter. The important thing is: how did you make out?"

"I'd rather know how *you're* making out," Andy vowed.

"Oh, well enough. I'm going to be afraid of my audiences: they will be such a new kind. The sketch is silly; I don't want you to see it. But I'm doing well enough. Now tell me about yourself."

"We're going to Foyot's. Shall I get a taxi?"

"You couldn't get a taxi at this hour; and you know I love to walk. Now"—she shook her gloved hands in laughing suspense—"do please tell me about your trip."

He was full of it, of course, but the chronicle was interrupted by frequent twists and turns through the home-going crowd, and in front of the Théâtre Français they brushed against McGregor's servant, returning to his master's limousine from the box-office. Comfortably muffled McGregor leaned forward the least bit in the world and in his high voice, called to Andy.

"I motored up," he said. "I wish you'd waited for me. It's more com—" Then he saw that Sylvia was with the young correspondent: he unswathed himself and, bowing, stepped with a wheeze to the curb.

Andy presented him.

"You're an American girl?" asked McGregor.

Sylvia straightway confirmed the impression.

"I tell you what," chuckled the contractor: "our girls are going to do as much fighting in this war as our boys are. Nursing, Miss Raeburn?"

"I wish I could," she said, "but I'm so useless."

"She's not useless," Andy declared: "she's given up a big

engagement in New York to come over here. She's an actress."

Above their darkened pouches, McGregor's hazel eyes brightened.

"An actress?" He asked her a half-dozen quick questions. He rattled off the names of many players, inquiring whether she knew their owners, but was not disconcerted when most of her replies were negative. "Well, I'm afraid my theatrical acquaintance isn't the best, Miss Raeburn."

"And are you here on war-work?" wondered Sylvia.

"I should say I am," McGregor replied. "She'd have thought so if she'd seen us two in the trenches, wouldn't she, Brown?"

Andy looked at him quickly, but McGregor did not give the expected wink: it seemed that he considered the word "trenches" as synonymous with "front."

McGregor made light of the favor, but much of the peril. Then Sylvia asked:

"May you tell what sort of war-work yours is?"

He had rather avoided the subject, but, now that she returned to it, appeared to meet it fairly enough:

"I sell aeroplanes. At a loss."

"Where's Tac?" inquired Andy, almost glad suddenly to miss the dog, because he somehow felt that they trod delicate ground.

Tac was no pet for a leash; up the avenue, he had been following them through the crowd with his nose not half an inch behind Sylvia's glinting heels. Now their sudden turn to the curb must have separated him from them.

"Tac?" echoed McGregor. "A friend of yours, Miss Raeburn?"

"Yes," she said; "a dog. But he won't be lost: he has the most wonderful scent in the world." Nevertheless, she looked about her with some anxiety.

Andy plunged into the throng of passers-by.

McGregor's eyes first followed Andy, then, and steadily, returned to Sylvia.



"That's a nice boy," he said.

Sylvia assented. "He's been awfully nice to me."

"But he's impulsive," McGregor pursued.

"I like impulsiveness, Mr. McGregor—when it's in the right direction."

"Yes, it's all right; but it's liable to be dangerous in wartime—in wartime and among strangers."

Her brows puckered. "I don't think Mr. Brown is afraid of danger."

"He's too much the other way, Miss Raeburn. He don't look where he's going: he just starts out. That's what I think, but maybe I don't know him well enough. Have *you* known him long?"

"Only since I came to Paris." Her grave eyes did not flinch. "He's a friend of a man I know at home." The pucker had been deepening, but it went no farther: Tac came bounding out of the crowd, scattering people to right and left. "*Mon vieux loup!*" she cried: "*Vous êtes très intelligent!*"

McGregor looked on. "He's got good points. He ought to be the very guard for a lady over here."

"I don't need a guard, and he doesn't speak a word of English," said Sylvia, glancing up with a face from which all indications of embarrassment had disappeared, "and my French accent is almost too much for him; but if I tell him to"—she lowered her always low voice—"to attack"—the dog tilted his head toward her—"You see, I have to be careful how I say it even in the middle of a sentence: if I tell him to do that, he'll fly at anybody I point to."

"Will he?" asked McGregor. "How do you say it in French?"

"Why, of course, the word sounds the same in French as in English," said Sylvia.

McGregor's servant was tinkering with the front of the car as no car-lover ever loses a chance to tinker. The contractor said "Look out, George," to him, then touched the dog, and called "Attack!"

There was a brown flash through the air, and George was

seen falling backward with the dog in his arms. Tac had leaped across the car's nose and, fixing his teeth in the servant's collar, thrown him.

"Good God!" said McGregor. "Call him off."

But Sylvia had already done that.

"*Halte! Halte, là!*" she had cried, and Tac had instantly stopped with one spread paw upon the servant's throat. "*Viens ici!*" she supplemented, and Tac came back to her, licking his chops.

It took some time—until Andy's return, in fact—for Sylvia to assure herself that the servant was not hurt and for McGregor to explain to everybody, including a little mob of persons innocent of English which immediately gathered, that he had had no idea how literally Tac would obey orders. They were rather relieved to separate.

Through the opened door of the restaurant, down the steps and across the red room with its comfortable compartments, Maurice, the head-waiter, first, and then Sylvia and Andy, Tac closely following, they passed, and as they went, the rosetted senators of France and the American majors stopped their eating and drinking to look at her. Andy noted it and triumphed: the cessation of talk, the noise of cutlery, suddenly died down—there were involuntary tributes to the girl at his side.

Theirs was a corner compartment. Tac curled, at a word from his mistress, at her feet, and was no more seen. Sylvia took the cushioned bench, and Andy, his back to the room, sat in the chair opposite and looked at her, over the table. He wanted to sit beside her, but did not dare.

"Let's begin all over again"—she cupped her chin in her hands and gave him the wonder of her blue-gray eyes. "I want to hear all you did down there."

Though with the genial assistance of smiling Maurice, he ordered that dinner, what they ate Andy could never afterward remember. He was carried too far away by the sight of her sensitive face respondent to his story, by her eyes that became all shades, and tints behind tints, as she listened; by her intimate sympathy and the sound of her voice in wise

council. He knew but that he told her everything and that she—and there was an added glory—approved all that he had done.

“Only,” she said, “you mustn’t be too discouraged.”

As if he could be that while she was there to encourage him!

“I mean,” she explained, “you mustn’t think the cause is wrong just because it’s mismanaged, or that the army isn’t a good one just because a few of the officers in it are trying to cover up the politicians’ mistakes.”

“Of course I won’t,” Andy asseverated. “Why, you ought to see those enlisted men!—you will be seeing them soon. Most of the officers are all right, too: but you just can’t look at those enlisted men and not believe in—in America and the flag and—and in just everything.”

“And that,” said Sylvia, “is what makes it all the worse for anybody to cheat them. I know.”

“I know you know,” said Andy.

She gave him added strength; he told her so.

“I wish I could,” she answered. “I wish I had the chance that you have. Oh, you men don’t know how hard it is to be a woman when there is a war!”

The flowerlike mouth was parted, the swiftly intaken breath made a little hissing sound as it passed over her small white teeth. Her eyes were at once flashing stars and bottomless pools. If there had been moments, since he first met her, when she seemed a child, she was now another Maid of Orleans to him.

## IX

They walked slowly down the rue de Seine and so along the river and past the outline of the Invalides toward the Pont de l’Alma. There were no artificial lights save, now and again, an electric street-lamp, hazy behind a globe of blue, but a clean moonshine painted the old thoroughfare with silver. The cool crisp sky was a sky of stars; Scorpio was still master of the heavens, and, with Cassiopeia almost directly overhead, they could look across the water and see the

dragon pursuing Ursa Minor toward the retreating wheels of the Charioteer.

"I don't know one of them by name," said Andy, a sweep of his right arm indicating every visible luminary—"and of course you know them all."

She had not resumed her gloves. Her white hand—that hand which he had longed to kiss—was on his arm. He felt it tremble there as a bird on a bough trembling in the cold.

"I'm not at all a wise woman, you know," she said.

He was trying to remember something from *The Merchant of Venice*, which he had been forced to read in the Americus high-school. Something about

"in such a night  
Troilus methinks mounted the Trojan walls,"

and about Troilus, whoever he was, sighing "his soul out toward the Grecian tents" where his sweetheart slept: it had been very dull reading then, but he wished he could recall it now. However, he knew that, if he could recall it, he would lack the courage to repeat it, and so he took up her own words, which were, after all, poetry enough for him:

"You *are* a wise woman. You've just been proving it. You kind of see through—I guess, it's *over*: yes, over—all the mean little things that get in between me and the big things and hide them from me."

"If I only deserved that!" said Sylvia.

From behind closed shutters in a window of one of the houses blindly facing the river, there came the low notes of a piano meditatively played.

On a common impulse, they paused to listen. Perhaps because of some connotation born of that phrase about the Grecian tents, the music made Andy think of a grove in a vast valley, with sunlight filtering through the green of ancient trees and, far off, the flash of a nymphic body vanishing to the reed-pipes of an unseen god.

"What is it?" he whispered.

Her answer was almost as much a whisper: "It's Gounod's *Au Printemps*. I used to play it years ago at boarding-school in Virginia."

She was not Joan of Arc to him now; soon—in another moment, perhaps—she would be; but just now she was that careless nymph, vanishing among the trees, glad and immortal. "I'll never hear it without thinking of you," he said.

There was a slight pressure of his arm, where her hand lay. "We must go on."

They moved forward with reluctant feet. Behind them the reedy calls of the pipes of Pan grew fainter and fainter until lost in the grove that never was.

She firmly brought the talk back to practical matters, advised him, assiduously fanned the fires of his militant patriotism, held intently before him his old ideal. In the clear moonlight, he could see the soft flush of her cheeks, the even brows, the sweet mouth and the eyes of steady faith. He must return to the camp and there either verify or dissipate his fears of mismanagement. A few paces back, he had wondered how much longer he could resist asking the impossible; again the violet ray in his spectrum, here she was the saint offering him a sword.

"Your tour isn't to anywhere but the camp?" he asked her.

No, she said, it wasn't; and Andy breathed relief. He had had, fleetingly, a red picture of her somewhere near the front. He wondered, when they reached the hotel, whether some such danger would overtake him there—whether he should ever see her again.

"When do you go?"

"To-morrow."

He had guessed as much. He almost guessed why she had not told him sooner.

"I don't know," he said, "just when I'll be off again."

Her eyes were full upon him: "You were telling me," she said, "that you didn't count—that you were only one. You do count. Don't forget that." The notes of her voice were the wood-notes of the stopped diapason's bourdon. "Perhaps you

can get the word to these boys' fathers and mothers that will make the politicians give the boys a—a square deal."

He took her hand.

"I know," he said.

"Try!"

It was as if she handed him the sword.

## CHAPTER VII

CONCERNS SOME EXPERIENCES, PSYCHOLOGICAL AS WELL AS PHYSICAL, OF A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR; AND TELLS A GOOD DEAL ABOUT DEMOCRACY IN THE DOLDRUMS

The Amish are a peaceable and thrifty farmer-folk, a peculiar sect, the descendants of Palatines attracted to the limestone plain of the Great Valley by the prospectuses of that best advertiser of the seventeenth century, William Penn, since whose time they have "kept themselves to themselves," intermarried, remained where the Quakers put them, and, thanks to their industry and the most fruitful soil in America, grown rich. They wear homespun clothes held together by hooks and eyes, because they consider that "buttons is a wanity"; they hire few servants, but help one another in tilling and harvesting; they will not go to law; they regard the census with suspicion, and many of them refuse to vote. A cardinal principle of their religion holds that war is murder.

In that principle Chrissly had been reared. When the local draft-board seized him on the ground that he had not been formally received into the faith of his fathers, his parents permitted him to go without a struggle because of the Pauline injunction of submission to constituted authority; but he was sent away from home with advice that warned him against the evil of willing participation in conflict, and he hated the thought of battle as sturdily as his father and mother had taught him to hate all other forms of sin.

The cantonment-life in America did not serve to lessen this aversion; his homesickness, which increased with his arrival in France, served only to intensify it. Then Chrissly had his interview with the German prisoners. Next he met Léonie and heard her story. At the Y. M. C. A. huts, he

listened to lectures on the causes and progress of the war, and, in order to improve his English, which was already altering through daily contact with men from various sections of the United States, he began to read the Bible for himself: he began, systematically, with Genesis and paid special attention to Joshua and the more belligerent of the Psalms. He often turned back to the words of Nehemiah: "Remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses"; and he was impressed by the message brought from Jehovah by Jeremiah to Zedekiah: "I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and in just wrath." Then came a day when he used to imagine the Song of Deborah issuing from the lips of Léonie.

Chrissy decided that this war was not murder, but execution: the killing of mad dogs. His neighbors at home were right in most things, but concerning the present business uninstructed. If he did not attempt to teach them, that was because, in his letters, he avoided points of controversy.

In such a mind he was when there had come the rumor that his unit would soon complete its training by a course of lessons under fire.

Chrissy was not soon to forget those last few days in camp. He had grown nearer to Léonie: whereas he spoke an English more or less peculiar, his French came without a trace of accent and with increasing fluency, and in his teacher he found a subject that possessed his thoughts. About his destination his unit had, when the rumor came that they were to march, no delusions. He sought out Léonie in the inn-yard and there told her.

There had been times when, through the dignity bequeathed her by her past sufferings, the light of earlier and happier days would peep and when childhood returned on her lips to mock precocious maturity; but now she heard him with a face like that of some statue hewn to symbolize the brave agony of France. Her lips were compressed, her large eyes were neither black nor brown, but like a mirror reflecting



far-off events that he might not understand and that she would not explain.

*"Ad—au revoir,"* she said.

*"Il vous faut dire à bientôt, mon amie,"* said Chrissly, quite as if he were speaking his native tongue.

*"J'espère que oui,"* said Léonie.

He would have answered that, but a perverse image of Minnie Taylor flashed into his head, and he left the inn-yard awkwardly.

## II

Chrissly's battalion slopped and slid on and on. Some of the men were singing:

*"Good-by, Ma! Good-by, Pa!  
Good-by, Mule, with yer old hee-haw!  
I may not know what th' war's about,  
But you bet, by gosh, I'll soon find out!  
An' O my sweetheart, don't you fear,  
I'll bring you a King fer a sou-ve-nir;  
I'll git you a Turk an' a Kai-ser, too,  
An' that's about all one feller can do."*

They swore at the weather, at their bad boots, at the muddy roads; but more often they joked. Nothing was sacred against their humor. They joked because they knew that they were going, and because they wanted to go, where death was.

"I wisht we could hear cannons or somesing," said Chrissly. The twilight deepened.

They passed a roofless building that must have been a hospital. Into it men were staggering with a stretcher on which lay a figure with its head so swathed in bandages that Chrissly thought it had no head at all. Chrissly saw a faint movement of its chest where the tunic had been torn open.

There was a scream—the scream as of a gigantic hound that had been wounded. It came from overhead. An explosion followed, and, in a field some hundred yards away, tons of earth leaped heavenward.

"There's your cannon, all right," said a man at Chrissly's side.

The descending earth pattered about them like hail. It was nearly night. A barn loomed ahead of them.

Every little while there was a noise like the snapping of whips. Chrissly wondered what it meant.

"Who-o-o-o-i-s-s-s-h!"

Metallic reverberations shook the barn. Men glued themselves against the wall. The air became heavy with odors sulphurous and suffocating.

"It's only Fritz's evening prayer," said the soldier next to Chrissly. "It won't last long. . . ."

A dark form came along and pushed Chrissly and his companion against the clammy farther wall of a communication trench.

"Stop there—and don't stick your head up," said the dark form as it disappeared.

An acrid smell, indescribably nauseating, hung heavily on the still air.

There came a blare of light ahead of them, and both men disobeyed the order they had just received. A star-shell had burst and was exposing to them a circle in No Man's Land.

Chrissly saw, bathed in white light, the top of a great ash-heap; torn earth, barbed wire, broken wheels, rusting and rotting accouterments. Figures, too—the grotesque figures of motionless men, fantastically contorted: Chrissly wondered if they had been thrown there from aeroplanes. Clenched fists; stiff upraised arms; legs bent in the wrong direction. A face grinned at Chrissly horribly, as if with spectral recognition. All this in the flash of a moment.

Darkness followed. It was hideous now because of what it concealed.

"There'll be flies to-morrow," said a veteran near Chrissly. "So thick you can't brush 'em off. Sticky. They breed out there. Up near Wytschaette, I tried to brush the flies off a stiff: when I touched his nose, it came off in my hand." He spat into the trench. "Gee, but they stink," he said. "One time—"

He was interrupted by a rattle of bullets. Both men drew their heads sharply below the parapet.

"Sharpshooters," said the veteran. "They spotted us by that star-shell."

Chrissy understood now what it was that sounded like the cracking of whips.

### III

He had imagined trench-warfare a continuous round of gas, hand-grenades, machine-gun fire and high explosives. As time wore on, he thought it chiefly a test of patience in which day and night were singularly alike. Yet variation finally came with little preamble. He found, one night, that he was as if on a hill over which the clouds piled darkly and the thunder rolled, while all the bolts of lightning from a tremendous storm knifed down into the valley behind.

"*Vas is los?*" he cried.

"That's a barrage!" cried the veteran.

"What next, anyways?" said Chrissy.

They were ordered into the dug-outs.

"What next?" echoed the veteran, after he had flung himself upon the pile of questioning men heaped in the narrow cave. He recovered his breath. "This means a raid, this does!"

For a long while the storm continued, smashes, shrieks, crashings all sounding at once in a demoniacal overture. Then, as the din lessened ever so little, there sounded above it the soul-shaking notes of a siren.

"Gas!"

With incredible speed, the pile of men had disentangled itself, and each man threw before his face the grotesque mask that, at any distance less than two miles from the front line, each soldier must wear suspended and ready, dangling against his chest. The order for fixed bayonets was passed by signals, for a masked man can not speak—and they hurried to their stations like so many hooded divers scurrying along the floor of the sea.

Across the vast ash-heap of No Man's Land, it was coming:

the gas. It rolled toward them silently, but without halt, curving a blue-gray cloud, stealthy yet swift, sure of itself, malign, deadly. It was here. Could the gas-masks really do all that the officers said they did? The gas enveloped the whole line of trenches.

The violence of the bombardment recommenced. Shells fell near now and still nearer. They made flashes of fire directly overhead. One appeared to rip itself in two above Chrissly and to die screaming. A portion of the trench leaped inward, and in the blast of flame that accompanied its fall, Chrissly had a glimpse of flying arms and legs.

The men had been formed closer together. They were poised for leaps. The gas-cloud had passed, but its fatal fumes remained, and the men retained their masks, so that, standing ready for action, they resembled hooded cobras, balanced to strike. Nobody could speak; every man watched his nearest officer.

Then a row of running soldiers became visible across the ash-heap, men in uniforms of greenish gray. The Germans were charging. . . .

The Americans were over, were running toward the advancing enemy.

Chrissly was running with his comrades. Into his gas-mask he was trying to shout curses upon the Germans.

They were about to meet. An instant more now—

They met.

In the shock of contact, Chrissly's mind was yelling "*Cochon!—Va-t-en, cochon!*" It was an unconscious repetition of the first words that he had heard Léonie utter, and it was in part the result of the feeling that, since these aliens understood neither Pennsylvania-Dutch nor yet English, they must be familiar with the only foreign language that Chrissly knew anything about. . . .

He came out of the raid untouched. When at last his unit was relieved and ordered back to the village whence it had started for the front, he sought out Léonie as soon as he had bathed and scorched the lice from his clothes with a hot iron

that the company-barber had somehow got hold of. He tried to tell her how he had remembered her.

Léonie was a phial of emotion tinctured by a sturdy distrust of man. Her eyes glowed at the sight of him, but she heard him with laughter.

"It will be a fine thing to write to your wife," she said.

"I haven't any wife," Chrissly protested.

"*Oh, là, là, là!*" laughed Léonie. "All these Americans have wives. Come into the kitchen, and I shall give you some *marmite*."

#### IV

Chrissly and the other men that had been to the front kept themselves, and were kept, almost as much as might be in view of the less fortunate soldiers billeted in their village. Each was the willing center of a group of eager questioners and listeners. These fighters had been the first of their ardent little army to see real warfare, and they were as proud of it as their fellows were curious.

There had been times when Chrissly found it hard to steal away to Léonie, and there was another reason why he felt that he ought to walk with circumspection: letters from home were beginning slowly to filter through the congested military mail-service of the A. E. F., and all this served to bring the Amishman-born closer again to Minnie Taylor. He was rapidly developing into a thorough soldier, occasionally he unconsciously assumed an air of trooper-sophistication not unbecoming; but he was troubled.

Léonie delighted to add to his troubles. She seemed to realize that she baffled him by her ignorance of many arts with a ready-made knowledge of which he thought American girl-babies entered the world; inviolably she raised that ignorance between them as if it were a subrisive mask, and from behind it she launched again and again the disquieting postulation of a Mrs. Chrissly at home.

Andy came upon him as he was leaving, reluctantly, one

of his soldier audiences, and Chrissly engulfed the correspondent with gratitude for the forwarded newspapers and with undisguised joy at reunion with a man from his own countryside. The young giant grew voluble over his trench-experiences.

"It's fine, fightin'," said Chrissly: "you feel like's if you was at las' doin' somesing; but them there org shells! Why, Brown, it gits so's it seems your insides of your ears can't stand no more noise."

It was only practice that the Americans were doing, as the communiqué had said. They would go up, a battalion or two at a time, and then return to the old grind at camp; perhaps in January they might begin to be a genu-wine army by taking over a small sector for keeps.

"All us fellows," said Chrissly, "we come here to fight, an' we want to fight, still; we don't want, when we git trained a'ready, to be held back; but the commandin' cheneral, I guess he's afraid if we go in under the French like the French want we should go, why, where's his job? Things ain't right, Brown," said Chrissly, with a slow head-shake. "O' course no common soldier don't dare say so still where any off'cer could hear him, ner yet write his folks nothin' but 'Sunny France' f' fear o' court-martial, but you'd ought fer to know the troos about the close an' the ammunition—all us fellows is talkin' about it on the quiet—an' you'd ought fer to go to Tours and Issoudun an' git fer why there ain't aeroplanes to perfect us when we're down in them there trenches, an' most of our casualties was because we hadn't no aeroplanes. An' you had ought to get a piece in the papers home still about it."

Tours and Issoudun? Andy had not heard that there was any news at these places. He remembered that one of Garcia's first warnings to him was to dwell on the infantry.

"But there's one sing's fine," said Chrissly, "an' that's the men. They're cold an' they're wet, Brown; they don't git their letters like they'd ought; an' their folks' presents to 'em, they're robbed in our own army-mails; they're livin' here in a pneumony part of the country an' sleepin' over the

cows; they ain't got good shoes er winter uniforms, an' 'most of 'em ain't got no socks at all; but they ain't quitters, an' they're goin' to be the best fighters this here war's ever saw."

Having an appointment with Léonie that he dared not break and did not want to break, but that he thought it safer to make a meeting of three, he conducted Andy to the rear of the inn and took him, by passages through which Chrissy himself had often delightfully adventured with his French acquaintance, to a stone-flagged outer-kitchen, long disused, where Léonie spread them a splendid luncheon of her own cooking and brought them from a secret cellar a bottle of old Mousigny, with tremendous precautions against detection at the hands of *M. le Propriétaire*.

For days Andy worked quietly and hard. He began with the desperately clutched hope that his own fears and Chrissy's declarations were mistaken; he ended face to face with confirmation. The training was not properly progressing. Housing and clothing conditions were such that only the excellence of the medical-service had prevented an alarming death-rate.

"And we're getting mighty little help from the War Department," medical-officer after medical-officer told him. "I don't know what we'd do without the Red Cross. They even lend the camions that the army can't supply; there isn't a splint or a bandage in any of these hospitals that came through the War Department: the Red Cross gave us every last one of them. Over a month ago we had to buy a billion francs' worth of medical supplies from the French—and the bill's still unpaid."

The doctors were working in a maze of enormous perplexity. Their quarters were makeshift, their supplies deficient, their corps of assistants numerically inadequate; the assignment of rank and the management of promotions put men of executive training into practical surgery and practical surgeons into executive positions; a young doctor with friends in power was commissioned and sent abroad to make an immediate report on "Surgery in the Zone of Advance" when there was no advance, while an officer of ten years' experience as a

hospital-administrator in the Canal Zone remained a powerless lieutenant: the system had less regard for individual training and qualification than for preserving its own integrity.

The only disease widely prevalent was homesickness. A runaway boy with whom Andy made friends was a rough young soldier from Cincinnati. He had quarreled with his father and vowed never to communicate with him; but, once the dreary life of the winter camp secured its effect, he wrote. Andy was with him when the answer came, that boy's first news from his home since he left it, many months before.

"It's pop's writing, all right," he said.

He tore the letter open and began joyously to read it aloud. Then he crushed it between his great hands: it contained the news that his mother had died twelve weeks ago.

"I'm on guard-duty to-night," he said dully. That was all he said: "I've got to do guard-duty to-night."

Andy's eyes filled. "I know I can fix it with your captain to get you relieved."

The soldier faced him. "No, thanks. I'm going through with this thing—with the whole damned business: that's what I'm here for."

"Isn't there," asked Andy, thinking of his own home—"isn't there anything I can do?"

The soldier emptied his pockets of their contents: five hundred francs in dirty, half-torn notes.

"Well," he said, "I had a little run of luck at craps to-day. I'd be glad if you could get me a money-order for this, or something. I guess the old man can use a little now." He turned away, but not before Andy had heard him gulp: "God! When are they goin' to let us fight?"

The lesser officers that Andy talked with tried to turn their homesickness into a joking commentary on their life here: "Siberia hasn't got anything on 'Somewhere,'" grinned a lieutenant—"except for whiskers and salt-mines. I've got a gasoline-lamp that explodes ten times for me, a mere lieutenant, and I can't guess how many times for a general, but when the gas runs out and sets fire to the room, everything



is warm and comfortable until the regimental fire-department butts in. Then the only way to keep near blood-heat's to drink this brunette liquid that the angels call *le noir*."

Andy saw one soldier exhaust his flash-lamp watching a Red Cross woman canteen-worker on a night when the camp lights failed, yet never approach her. He heard another address some comrades:

"Damn it, there's a damned sign up there says there's goin' to be one o' those damned church-services in the damned town-square Sunday morning with our damned sky-pilot presidin'. I used to go to the damned things at home sometimes, and I'm damned if I'm not goin' to this one here."

Ankle deep in the mud of a village street and huddled under the eaves of a dripping cottage were three men, of a late afternoon, to whom Andy listened.

"I've been up to Paris," said the first, "an' I got out tudy-sweet. Heard a hell of a lot about Paris—before I went there; but you take it from me, kid, it's old Philadelphia has the prettiest women in the world."

The second man snorted. "Philadelphia?" he said. "How about Denver, old top?"

The third man demanded: "Say, you fellows, speakin' o' real folks, was either of you guys ever in my home-town? I come from Kansas City, I do."

When Andy moved on, there was every prospect of a fight over the question of what American city produces the highest degree of beauty.

These and many other men in the army were in a purgatory of unremitting discomfort. The billets were seriously overcrowded; a shipment of boots, overcoats and other articles of clothing proved to be of odd sizes; instead of feeding itself the Expeditionary Force was compelled to consume enormous quantities of French supplies, and the short-rationed French peasants knew it and grumbled.

There were all sorts of stories current, some reflecting on the good manners of American generals, others on the fairness of the French—that they gouged our men on everything they

bought. Among these asseverations, the patent one was that French officers acting as instructors at the camp were displaced by untried Americans, and there was a general belief that the staffs of the French and American armies were, because of this and other disconcerting events, upon only the most formal terms.

Letters and papers from home distressed Andy with their assertions that no decision had yet been reached on field guns, and that contracts had been awarded only recently for machine guns. In the meanwhile the men in the various cantonments were getting their training from blue-prints and wooden models of the gun that was yet to be manufactured.

Andy felt desperately the urge to do something, something to make the folks back home understand the terrible necessity for haste, and yet at the same time he realized how futile his efforts would be, how ineffectual his pen against the complacent crust of a vast, slow-moving, highly-organized governmental department.

The further Andy sought and the more he thought, the greater was his bewilderment. For some of the conditions, at home as well as abroad, more or less valid excuses might be found; he made due allowance for the fallibility of human judgment, for the bigness of the task, for our unpreparedness, and for our lack of military experience. And yet when the discounts were made and excuses all registered the unexplained totality was, to Andy, overwhelming. All authorities agreed that artillery was the vital essential in trench warfare, that unless the infantry was adequately supported by artillery it could mean only one thing—slaughter. Yet—! Andy threw up his hands in despair. An expeditionary force made up of men as fine and brave and young and exalted as ever went forth in the cause of righteousness, asking only that they might strike a blow for their precious democratic ideals, these men—Andy's brothers from home—were they to be needlessly sacrificed? That was what it would mean if they went in unsupported by adequate artillery. Such a situation was unbelievable!

We had been buying aeroplanes from Italy, but to add to Andy's distress, he was told that Italy could sell us no more. He made a visit to one of our chief aeroplane schools, and to his amazement learned that there were so few planes that a lesson in practise flying was limited to ten minutes. It didn't require an expert to know that at this rate it would take many months to develop an ace.

Andy was as nearly hopeless as he had ever been in his young life—ragingly, desperately hopeless, for while we muffed and muddled, Germany was preparing for her greatest offensive.

## v

Andy sought the barn in which Chrissy was quartered. It was a low stone building with a slit for a window in the low damp loft where men were billeted and whence they descended by a ladder, to the ground on which the owner's cows had their home. Into the muddy street, from the dark doorway, there rolled the smell of housed cattle. All the human dwellers in the place were lined up outside under such protection from the rain as was afforded by the sodden eaves. They stamped their broken boots; they flapped their arms; their faces and fingers were blue with cold, and their thin clothes fluttered about them. Somebody was always coughing: an infection they called "Trench-throat" caused recurrent spasmodic contractions of the larynx. Some of the hardier had taken off their jackets and were hunting in the seams for lice.

All up and down the curving village street were similar groups.

"It's true," he said to Chrissy—"what you told me is true."

Chrissy blew a visible blast upon his aching hands. "Sure it's true, Brown," he said. He stamped his feet, bending his body from side to side, and trying to drag over his wrists the too short sleeves of his blouse. "We don't mind the trenches; we all want to fight still; but fer why, if they're not goin' to let us fight, don't they send us winter clothes?"

There was a wiry little man beside him, in whose eyes burned the fire of fever.

"An' why don't they give us our pay?" he demanded. "We ain't seen a cent for months, we ain't."

"The folks at home is all right," said Chrissy—"the real folks—but you'd ought to let them know the troos, Brown. Somebody's got to do it; and the brass hats over here can't make the brass hats at home do nothin'—or else they don't try none."

"Cheese it!" hissed the wiry man. "Provost!"

His fevered eyes had caught sight of an officer, the local provost marshal, coming through the mud. The officer passed, his chin up, his eyes fixed before him. He wore heavy boots and a warm overcoat.

Heels clicked. The men came to soldierly attention; they stiffly saluted. The officer, still looking rigidly ahead, made, in response, an abortive upward movement with his crooked right hand.

Not a word of any sort was uttered until he was out of earshot. Then the men gathered about Andy and told him over again the things he already knew.

## VI

One night, by a candle, in an uncarpeted inn-room, he wrote to Sylvia:

"I am going to do my duty, as you saw it and as I saw it; but it's a hard duty. If I could only fight! . . .

"We weren't ready. And after all these months of being in the war, we aren't ready now. The few men we've got here want to fight—enlisted men and line-officers; but whatever's responsible for the A. E. F.'s clothes and food and arms and ammunition—somebody or something *must* be responsible!—hasn't turned a hand to get these things over here. It's all a terrible muddle.

"I'll write, if one fellow's writing can help. . . .

"I believe I couldn't do it if it wasn't for you. You're like a sort of Joan of Arc to me. You *are* Joan of Arc. . . .

You have such faith, and you're so brave. You don't seem ever to doubt. That makes me brave and faithful; if I were more worthy of you, it would make me so as *I'd* never doubt, too. I think about you as if you were the whole spirit of France and America—the Spirit of Democracy. I've always wanted to tell you this and never had the nerve. But I can put it in a letter, anyhow. . . .”

He placed the missive in a stamped envelope and addressed it to her. But he did not send it. He carried it with him, next his heart.

## VII

He went to the aviation-stations and met the head of our aviation-service in France. A tall, broad-shouldered, black-haired man with an aggressive jaw and the brow of an eagle, this officer had been goaded beyond the last limits of military reticence. He had given up his hardly-won position as counsel to a great corporation for a coloneley in the expeditionary forces, and, since he had a life-long knowledge of flying, was placed in his present position; but he was checked by superiors with but little knowledge of the air, and the red tape of the regular army was killing him. He put his case with the blunt frankness of the hopeless:

“I have to answer for the A. E. F.'s aviation-service: the staff won't give me the power to demand improvement, and the War Department's aircraft-management won't give me the material. Every day lost means a loss of American lives and American money and the prolongation of the war. The other day I cabled Washington: ‘For God's sake, let me see just one of your promised 25,000 planes’—that will probably cost me my place.”

Andy had never seen a face so full of heartbreak.

## VIII

Garcia was in the anteroom of the press-division's offices. He was trying to talk to a thin, excitable French journalist, Ferlet, the same man that had been with Andy at the site

of the assemblage-plant, along the projected lines of communication.

"Here, Brown," said the lieutenant, "tell me what this lemon wants, will you?"

Ferlet, with a hail of gestures, repeated his request.

"He says," Andy interpreted, "that the French newspapers want to know what to call our men."

"Call 'em? Call 'em Americans. That's what they are."

"But he means a nickname. He represents a sort of French press-club. He says the French people must have a *sobriquet* for us—a term of affection, he calls it. They have *poilu* for their own fellows, he says; 'Tommy' for the British and *jasse* and—What's that? Oh, yes!—and *piotte* for the Belgians. He says our men don't like 'Sammee.'"

"They don't," nodded Garcia.

"And then," pursued Andy, "he says"—Andy questioned the Frenchman to corroborate his memory of something that Ferlet had just told him; Ferlet nodded—"he says—of course, I don't believe he's correct, but he says the French newspapers were told 'in a very high American quarter'—those are his words—not to use 'Teddy.' He says that's the word the people had adopted, but 'a high American quarter'"—

"That's right," said Garcia. He was blinking into space, in the way he had, when hurrying over rough places. "Tell him to call 'em Americans."

"But what's the objection—"

Garcia was standing by a desk. He brought the palm of a hand upon it with a bang.

"We're not here to pick fancy names for the French people," he cried. "Tell him to call us 'Yanks,' then."

"He says the French can't pronounce it," Andy reported.

"Then tell him this is my busy day," said Garcia.

Andy made a polite version of the dismissal. When the Frenchman had left, disconsolate, Garcia asked:

"Now, what's *your* trouble, eh?"

"I'd like to see Major Curtis."

Garcia drew together suspicious brows.

"He's tied up in a conference."

"I'll wait."

"He can't see you."

"Isn't he the chief of this bureau?" asked Andy.

"I'm in charge of it. What do you want to see him about?"

It was difficult to be propitiatory, but upon propitiation Andy was determined:

"I want to see him about a lot of things—a clothing-story, and an ammunition-story and an aviation-story."

The lieutenant's florid face stiffened. "Have you been to Tours?"

"Tours and Issoudun."

"How'd you get a pass?"

"The provost marshal at the camp extended the one I had here."

Garcia put out a clawlike hand. "Let me see it." Andy surrendered the rubber-stamped paper. "Come in here," said Garcia, as he looked at it. He led the way to his office and carefully closed the door. "If any one comes, tell 'em to wait," he commanded the orderly that he left outside. Then, with disconcertingly unusual heartiness, he asked Andy to sit down. "Now, then," he said, cocking his feet on the desk, "tell me all about it, old man."

"It's a fact," stipulated the cautious Andy, taking the indicated chair, "that you represent Major Curtis?"

"Sure it is. I'm in charge to-day, and what I say goes."

"Well, then," said Andy—and poured out his entire story of the American camp. He had determined to play his game openly.

Garcia picked his teeth and listened. His face gave no indication of either approval or disapproval.

"Then what?" he asked.

"Then what?" Andy echoed.

"Then you went to the aviation-stations, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Andy, "and here's what I found out there; it wouldn't be fair to quote my authority, but it was the best: I found out that there isn't a trace over here of the \$640,000,000 for aircraft construction that Congress appropriated away

last June. I found out that the automobile manufacturers, the fellows given complete control of production, are trying to build planes around this Liberty motor, instead of copying approved types, and won't have developed one solitary fighting-plane by the end of next summer."

He paused, but Garcia remaining silent, he went on:

"By the end of next summer we won't have a single American-made *chasse* in France, and not a single heavy bomber. They say they're going to make six hundred De Haviland Fours, and I got it from the best sources that we wouldn't have seventy-five of them by August. One or two machines are said to be on their way here, sent uninspected 'because of an overseas order.' We're going to try to buy from the French and English, who can't afford to sell. The whole thing looks bad, and there's evidently some one over here who's business it is to see that nobody makes a fuss about it."

That deeper flush which was a danger-signal had entered into Garcia's cheeks. He moved his toothpick.

"We haven't got the men," Andy continued. "What men we have got are not equipped and are not regularly paid. Their home-mail's held up, they're poorly clothed, and their training's virtually stopped. There's not a department that's not in nearly as bad a fix as the aviation. We'll lose out to the Boche unless these things are remedied. If the public learns the facts, it will bring Washington round in time to win the war. I'm going to tell the public the facts."

Garcia's feet were jerked from the desk-top. "That's information of value to the enemy!"

"If the American people don't get it, they'll be licked," said Andy calmly.

Garcia snapped his long fingers. "How do you think you'll get it across? You know well enough we won't pass a line of it."

Andy rose. "That's what I wanted to get your decision on," he said. He started for the door.

"Wait a minute!"

Andy looked back. Garcia's gaze was almost white. Over his prominent cheek-bones the skin was twitching.



"You know we can send you home," he said.

"And you know," said Andy, "that I can take my story in my head along with me."

"Wait a minute!" Garcia for a second time commanded.

"Do you understand that what you're going to try to do is a violation of army regulations?"

There was a row of books on Garcia's desk. From it Andy drew a copy of the blue-bound manual of field service. He opened it at its eighth section.

"That's my authority," he said.

Garcia's restraint shattered from him. With a sweep of his right hand he knocked the little book to the floor.

"To hell with that!" he cried. "I don't give a damn for that! I tell you once and for all: if you try this thing on, I'll get you—and get you right! Mind you, now"—he raised a prophetic fist—"I've had trouble enough with you, and I'm gettin' tired talkin'. You can't do this thing if you try, and if you do try, I'll get you!"

"Good afternoon," said Andy.

## IX

Who were truly representative of the war-meaning of America: the private soldiers, eager to forget their undeserved and unnecessary hardships and to give their lives for democracy—they, or the secret forces for which Garcia spoke? Those would face death gladly, these would watch the sacrifice with cynical laughter. Was democracy a lie? Was all this muddle the true expression of civilization, was this man "the reasonable creature" at his highest development? The instalment-plan *Universal History* on the center-table at home taught how England went to war with Spain because of Jenkins' ear; were we at war for less idealistic reasons than Andy had supposed when he left Americus, and was Garcia an agent of corruptionists?

After all his efforts at growth, Andy had not added a cubit to his stature; he was still much of the boy that most of those soldiers at the camp were, and it was toward them that, like

calling unto like, he swung. His religion was the boy's religion, something accepted with faith so unquestioning as rarely to demand any thought about religion once the acceptance had been accomplished; but now he began to see these two phases of the American effort, the great and good side and the side small and evil, as creating an issue essentially religious, the ancient gnostic issue between right and wrong.

It would be so much easier for him if he could only fight. Doctors were fallible. . . .

Still boyishly, he that evening wrote and posted a long letter containing all the information that he had gathered concerning conditions in the A. E. F. It suggested that these were ills that should be known by the persons in power in order to bring about correction, yet ills that could easily be, and probably were, hidden from the notice of the officials, concerned with so vast plans as to have small time for details. This letter he addressed to the general commanding the American forces in France.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DEVOUTLY DEVOTED TO TROUBLE

ANDY wrote that letter in his character of a correspondent representing the free press of America and officially accredited by the War Department to the United States Army. He wrote out of the sense of a dual duty: to help win the war and to secure fair treatment for the private soldiers upon whom, in the last analysis, must rest the burden of battle. In what he believed to be the joint cause of America and of America's enlisted men, he drew a brief that ought, he felt, to necessitate an investigation. Then, having thus appealed to Cæsar, he realized that there was nothing to do but wait Cæsar's decision.

It was no easy task. Sylvia's tour lengthened itself, and she did not write: he had to be content with distant dreams of her. Blunston cabled him, "Do your duty," which Andy conceived himself as already doing, and sent a letter, developing that phrase, which did not reach its destination until after the duty, as both agreed in seeing it, was done. Andy was aware that, from so busy and exalted a personage as him to whom the appeal had been made no reply should be expected soon, so he expended his young enthusiasm in compositions addressed to Sylvia, but never sent, and in epistles to his mother, in which he recanted from all his early ideals of woman as a creature of idleness and exalted the figure of the woman that works.

Owen Evans grew daily more pessimistic. When Andy, still too timid to tell of his appeal, would seek to find comfort by hinting at the good points of the person to whom that appeal had been directed, Evans would snort skepticism.

"I think he'd be all right," said Andy, "if the War Department would only hurry men and supplies."

The mysterious and magnificent McGregor was more of a comfort in every way. His optimism was tonic, in spite of Andy's doubts and mental reservations. His friend from Chicago knew the most expensive dining places, as well as the old and out-of-the-way ones, though he declared them much inferior to those of the city of his enthusiasm. He enjoyed, immensely, taking Andy from place to place, to the obvious cafés de la Paix and de Paris, to Paillard's, in the house where Rossini used to live, and to Cairo's and the Volney and the Ambassadeurs. They dined seldom at the Ritz because McGregor had a prejudice against eating in the hotel in which he slept, a prejudice that many men who travel much, share with him. He knew what to order and took great pride in making an artistic as well as an ample selection, with the result that his dinners were always as good as they were long.

Andy was too young and too healthy not to enjoy them fully and uncritically. Indeed, he enjoyed them and his host's never-failing, though sometimes ancient anecdotes, so much that he first fell to describing to McGregor, with backward-looking fondness, Americus and the home-life there, and thence passed easily and happily to more than a mere mention of Sylvia: except in matters of business, Andy always had to talk of what was nearest his heart, and when the elder man admitted that his meeting with Sylvia had created an honest admiration for her beauty, the younger replied by praises of her character that could not fail to betray more than Andy would, as yet, wholly admit to his inner consciousness. The contractor encouraged his talk, said that he was a renewer of youth and a companion among strangers, received a full picture of his guest's past and present and, respecting the boy's pride, even submitted to be himself an occasional guest at such dinners as Andy could provide by way of return. Something, however, kept Andy's lips sealed upon all that he feared about affairs in the A. E. F.: he rarely spoke of the war to McGregor and then, though he could not have told why, only in the most guarded terms.

So passed a Christmas unlike any within Andy's experience;

so passed a lonely and homesick New Year's Day, and still more days, and still there was no echo from the appeal that Andy had written. The Foreign Office told the correspondents, in more and more details, of German plans for a staggering offensive, which had come into French possession, but which France would be in a hard plight either to frustrate or repulse; evidences of democracy's muddle increased as an ink-drop spreads upon blotting-paper; the strain on the military liaison was serious; it was growing daily more difficult to conceal American delays from a French populace daily growing more suspicious; at camp there was, for encouragement, only speculation upon the irrefrangible spirit of the line-officers and enlisted men.

The time came when Andy felt he could bear no more in silence. It came in Paris, at five o'clock of a January afternoon, when he was seated with Evans between a bock and the windows of the Café Napolitain, dully watching the endless boulevard-procession of new officers and old *réformés* and of women wounded in the women's way and never to be cured. He blurted out the bare statement of what he had done.

Evans was at first incredulous; then he burst into laughter, but he had not meant it for unkindly laughter, and, when he saw the hurt in Andy's frank eyes, he apologized.

"Why, you couldn't have hoped for an *answer!*" Evans nevertheless insisted. "What was in your brief, anyhow?"

Andy told him, beginning with conditions at the camp and ending with the ominous prophecy about the aeroplane situation.

It was the latter that especially interested Evans. "Somebody over here to hush up the aircraft scandal?" he repeated when Andy had concluded with an expression of his fears in that matter. "Well, I just guess there is, and he's the original Mr. Fix-it: the American people haven't the ghost of a chance to hear the truth about aeroplanes. I've run into the man a couple of times, and I think he's the pleasantest crook I ever met. You know him: I've heard you speak of him often lately, but it wasn't any business of mine to put you wise."

"Who is it?" asked Andy, but he knew the answer with a sudden clarity.

"B. Frank McGregor," said Evans.

Swiftly Andy recalled his first distrust of the contractor. He recalled how McGregor had always admitted his interest in aviation.

"I don't like to think it," he said. He felt himself looking guilty. "He's been a regular prince to me."

"Sure he is: the prince-business is his business. That's how he lives. Besides, I guess he likes you: crooks are human beings. But don't you make any mistake about it: I've got it from half a dozen sources, only nobody can get it printed: McGregor's the man."

Andy was beleaguered by both mortification and the sense of betrayal. He had failed of being the keen-sighted journalist of his ambition, and his kinder impulses were imposed upon and flouted by a man that had approached him in friendly guise: McGregor's motive, as thus seen, could have been nothing but a general desire to keep him, as a reporter, unsuspecting.

"You mean the man is over here just to keep things quiet?"

"Just that. It's his game to be pleasant to everybody. But I don't mean he isn't pleasanter to some fellows than to others. If he's been extra pleasant to you, it was probably for your own sake." Evans smiled. "Why shouldn't he be? I like you myself." He would have said more; but his eye was caught by one of the passing pedestrians. He waved his hand. "Hello!" he cried.

A girl answered him. She was a swarthy slip of a girl with lips vermilion. There was about her something that struck an unfinished chord in Andy's memory.

Evans rose.

"Come here," he invited her, cap in hand. To Andy he whispered from a corner of his mouth: "You have to do these things sometimes, my son, in our business. That's Garcia's girl. I met her with him, once. She's got him all tied up, and she talks for a drink." The girl was edging toward them among the sidewalk-tables. "Maybe we'll get some good dope."

She was beside him now. From a great muff she drew one slim hand and offered it to Evans. Her profession was unmistakable, but she was very pretty. Andy remembered her at last: she was the girl that he had seen with Garcia at the restaurant on the Quai des Grands-Augustins.

"Jacquette," said Evans, speaking his easy inaccurate French, "this is Mr. Brown. Sit down. What will you have?"

Red to his eartops, Andy felt that he discovered himself as unaccustomed to this sort of company and was the more polite because he feared his consequent awkwardness might appear as discourtesy. The fact that such women received so little deference seemed to him to make deference incumbent. Still agitated by Evans' matter-of-fact accusation of McGregor, the boy was unprepared for novel society: he saw her confident assumption of a place at their table, saw her order and sip a bock, heard her chatter laughingly with his companion; but he realized little of what was passing until Jacquette, skilfully directed by Evans, was saying:

"Ah, that poor man, M. Garcia! He loves me so much. Attend: I shall read you the letter that he sent me the other day."

She drew a big purse from her big muff and an envelope from the purse. She read to them with delighted giggles and extravagant gestures that mimicked a buffoon lover of the burlesque-stage. It appeared that Garcia had written for an appointment and that she was even now late for it.

Andy felt that this was a keyhole-performance. It was presently evident that Evans shared, in his degree, the feeling, for he soon interrupted:

"You ought not to read us those things. They are confidential."

Jacquette only giggled. "What matter? A man like that!"

"But you will keep the appointment?"

"Puff!" The girl tightened her mouth and tilted her nose. "When I am so disposed. There is no hurry: he always waits." She ordered another bock. "And now the news that he writes to me. Attend again, messieurs."

She resumed her reading of Garcia's letter. In a single

sentence, he informed her that the American Expeditionary Force would, on the morrow or the day following, end its period of training and take over, in real earnest, a sector of the trench-line northeast of Toul. She giggled still more as she read the appended afterthought:

"But of course you must not tell this, for we have orders that it is to be known to nobody, and I tell you only to show you how much I love you."

Probably never in her life was Jacquette dismissed so summarily as she was dismissed by Evans as soon as she communicated this unexpected piece of news.

## II

In the utter darkness before the next day's dawn, Andy, cloaked from chin to heels in his raincoat, and looking twice his natural bulk under the layers of jerseys, shirts and underclothes that wrapped him, tramped along the empty streets to the Gare de l'Est.

That was a strange Paris which lay about him, an empty Paris. The rue Vivienne was like a prison-corridor; in front of the corner-café, the chairs and tables were piled head-high; he was the only living thing that moved along the Grands Boulevards. Here and there, a street-lamp flickered wanly like the gutting candle in a sickroom. The great gray walls tossed back the noisy echoes of his hobnailed boots; had he spoken, it would have been in a whisper. Everywhere there brooded the spirit of expectancy. The very shutters of the closed shops on the Boulevard de Magenta suggested to Andy the eyelids of a man that veils his sight when he holds his breath. It was as if all France, exhausted by forty months of war, leaned, half-fainting, against her ramparts in wait for such help as America could at last supply.

All the way down in the train that spirit of tense expectancy prevailed. Andy and his two companions—Evans and Innis, a writer who had for some time been the representative in France of a well-known magazine—thought it could be read even in the faces of old farmers as they looked from their



work to the racing engine, in the eyes of muddy *poilus* crowding the way-stations. It was evident that, overnight, the news had somehow spread; on the lips of their French fellow-passengers it at length became articulate:

"Is it true that the Americans are going into the trenches at last?"

The Americans themselves knew it—the soldiers that were first to be moved to new villages and then marched forward for fifteen miles and into the fighting-line. By the time of the correspondents' arrival at Neufchâteau, groups of these men were saying good-by to the comrades that they were to leave behind them and the French folk among whom they had lived. What most struck Andy was how thoroughly they knew it. There was no brag in their words, and yet there was no weakness in their hearts. The conversation was casual; it broke with an abrupt:

"Well, I guess I gotta be getting along. Good-by."

In the muddy street, men in khaki shook hands with men in khaki, as they might have parted a year since, after a business trip together. An American soldier would clasp an old householder on the shoulder, or bow gravely to the householder's wife. Not a few tossed French children into the air, and laughed into their faces, and tried to say "*Au revoir*"—and hid the fact that they were thinking of other children in another land that they might never see again.

The correspondents looked the other way. They hurried to the press-bureau.

Here, around a stove in the center of the room, sat three censors.

"Now, then," said Innis, "are you going to let us see this show?"

A momentary pause succeeded that question. The officers looked at one another, embarrassed. Then they let fall a little hail-shower of apologies. The American troops, they said, were going in under the French, and the French commanding-general would not allow correspondents to accompany them to the trenches.

Evans stormed; Innis argued; Andy, whom these gave no

chance to speak, grew redder and redder. It was no use: There was only one appeal. The correspondents must go to Chaumont and lay their petition before Lieutenant-Colonel O'Malley, chief of the Military Intelligence.

"Fine mess, isn't it?" fumed Evans. "The American free press under the control of a bunch of detectives!"

But, as Evans put it, they got as much material that afternoon and evening for their newspapers as could be furnished next day were the limitations of the censorship to remain in force.

### III

It was a calmly smiling O'Malley that received them in his barnlike quarters, early next morning after their cold thirty-miles' ride, but the smiles preceded only an expression of hopelessness. It was granted that the petition asked nothing save justice, but it was reiterated that, though an effort was being made to arrange matters, the Americans were going in under a French general and that this general's will must be law.

"But this is history!" pleaded Innis.

"I know it," the chief agreed.

"Then," Evans assumed, "the status of our men under the French is to be precisely that of the Portuguese under the English?"

He repeated a story to the effect that the Portuguese had recently tried a raid and that some of them were captured. Presently the captives came back with a German note addressed to their English general: "Thank you, but when we need any of these, we'll come and take them."

It was clear that the chief of the Intelligence Department did not like the comparison. He said he would see what he could do.

After tedious hours he sent for them to say that the French had changed their minds: the American newspaper-men were to have a sight of the start of the march of the American troops from a point about nine miles behind their destination: more might not be asked.

"That for us," said Innis to Evans, as the party left the office—"to you and me that were in trenches and under fire before the censors smelt salt water east of Atlantic City! What do you know about it, anyhow?"

"I know this," Evans answered: "I'm going back to Paris to-night. All we could see to-morrow'd be a little more of what we saw yesterday at Neufchâteau. I've got all I need for my story. If these sap-heads think they can keep me down here for a parade, they're mistaken, that's all. Come on over to the station. We'll eat there: then, if you fellows want to stay and be suckers, you can see me on my train at least."

Andy and Innis had decided to remain and see what could be seen of the march-out. Both held to this resolve through dinner, and Innis never altered it. It was something that happened immediately after the meal which changed Andy: two or three staff-officers were on the station-platform; they said they were arranging for a special car to be attached to the Paris train and to carry with it the general to whom Andy had addressed his still unanswered report.

"Do you suppose," asked Andy, as the three reporters walked off: "that he would go away the night before his men went into action?"

Evans shrugged. "You heard what they told us," said he. "He might have some conference on with Pétain."

Swathed in their raincoats, they paced the platform. Presently, in a shadowed doorway, Evans detected Garcia.

"What do you suppose he's skulking around here for?" asked Innis.

"Keeping an eye on us," said Evans. "We'll let him know we're on to him anyhow." He waved to Garcia almost derisively.

Realizing himself observed, the lieutenant beckoned:

"Brown, come here a minute. I want to see you."

"More trouble for you, Andy," said Evans.

Andy feared so, but he obeyed the summons. Garcia led him to the farthest end of the platform.

"Going back to Paris?" he began.

"I might," said Andy, cautiously non-committal.

It was dark on the platform, save at such spots as were directly under the few electric-lights. Garcia's face was therefore not easily read, but there was a snarl in his voice as, with a monosyllabic command, he produced from his pocket several pieces of paper and thrust them toward his victim:

"Here!"

Andy took the papers. "What's this?"

"It's your letter to the general." Garcia gave vent to a short laugh. "I told you you couldn't go over our heads. You poor boob, you didn't think you'd get an answer, did you?"

He turned on his heel. A moment later, he was lost in the night.

Andy walked slowly to the nearest lamp and looked at the crumpled sheets. They were indeed the hard results of his investigations: somehow, his petition must have got no farther than the headquarters of the Military Intelligence.

#### IV

There was one more chance. The general would be aboard this night-train to Paris. Should Andy remain and see the march-out, or take the train and see the general in person?

The choice was hard. He had come to France to see America in the war; through long months, which darkened into a week's-long night of despondency, he had waited, and now the event was at hand. He was at the age when the appeal of adventure reaches its strongest, and when adventure means physical action—at the age when it is hard to turn one's back on marching men. He ought to see the march-out for his papers' sake. He could see the general some other time: he could try to see the general when that personage came to the station. Perhaps nothing would result from an interview anyhow; Garcia had secured the letter: why not let the matter end there? Andy felt himself only a reporter, and a poor one: how could a single boy hope to prevail against the will of vast political forces and the workings of a great organization the powers of which were dictatorial? Why should

he be expected to attempt what none of his companions contemplated?

Yet he could not excuse himself from the task to which he had set his hand. Now that it appeared his letter had been intercepted, to see the general was more important than to see the march-out. Having had more tastes than one of army-delays, he thought that no formal appointment could be so favorable as this chance meeting. He could not reach such a personage on his passage, surrounded by servants, across the platform: to be reached, he must be sought on the train. If nothing came of it, Andy would at least have done the right thing. That he was one against many could not lessen the justice of his cause or the need for serving it: he ought to go forward precisely because nobody else was going.

He thought of his mother and of Blunston and, most of all, of Sylvia: he knew what they would counsel. Never doubting that he would at least, as a bearer of War Department credentials, be given an interview, he realized that he must do all that one man could for the good of his country. He had a healthy dread of scenes, but he saw himself going to the general as petitioners broke through Roman crowds to gain the ear of Cæsar, heard himself argue and plead and explain—even began to compose and learn the terms of his appeal. No man has done his duty until he has done all that he can do: until Andy had tried to see the general, he would not have tried his best to do what the best that was in him declared, with unequivocal voice, to be right.

"Evans," he said when he had rejoined his companions and parried their joking questions about Garcia, "I guess I'll—I'll go 'long with you—and see him on the way."

"Him?" said Evans. "Who?"

"The general. I'll see him about that letter of mine, you know."

Evans said he would be glad to have Andy's company. "But I advise you to keep away from his nibs," he added.

With decision, however, Andy's confidence had revived.

Innis readily agreed to see them on his return and give

them any details of the march-out of which their immediate journey might deprive them.

## V

On the train to Paris, an orderly barred Andy from the general's car.

"He hasn't got no time to talk to reporters," said the orderly.

Andy scribbled a note. It was a respectful, hopeful, young sort of note. It described its writer as the holder of the War Department appointment that made him an accredited correspondent, recalled his letter and said that it was about this that Andy wanted to speak.

The orderly took it grumblingly in. He was gone but a moment, during which, however, Andy made desperate efforts to recall the opening words of his speech.

Then the orderly came back. He was grinning:

"The general says he needn't see you. And the other fellow says your letter didn't go to the general but to him, and was referred to the press-division for action . . ."

"What did I tell you?" said Evans.

## CHAPTER IX

### OF SARAH BROWN, AND OF A YELLOW LETTER FOUND IN A TRUNK

MINNIE did not write to Andy. She told herself that she had "turned Andy down"; when she passed Sarah Brown on the street, she always inquired for him, but always inquired commiseratingly. Instead of being pleased, she was only piqued by the occasional postcards that he sent her.

Sarah found herself very lonely, in spite of the boarders now established in her house, but she showed to the world of Americus neither her loneliness nor the pain that she suffered when inquiries such as Minnie's pricked feelings that none knew she possessed.

She showed nothing except a sterner face and a little more abstraction in the management of her house.

There were several letters from Andy now. She began smolderingly to resent that stamp "passed by Censor," which meant that her boy's messages of love must all be revealed to an army officer before they were permitted to go on their way to the eyes for which they had been written; but she was unfeignedly glad to get them, come how they might.

He sent money home—Andy could not afford to live at the camp, but there had never been a time when he could not help his mother—and urged Sarah, since he was doing better than he had expected, to "fire the boarders"; but Sarah did not follow this advice. It was in one of these gift-bearing missives that there appeared this paragraph:

"Tell Mr. Blunston (I haven't time to write two letters to-day) that nobody will ever convert the French people to any high-flown ideas about raising the Boche to higher things after this war, or by means of this war. There are a whole lot of things about all sorts of conditions that ought to be

told, but won't be passed, and the French don't see how any good can be done except just whipping the enemy. They think of the Germans as a lot of criminals—some must be shot and the rest sent to jail for life. Our enlisted men are splendid—just splendid. There's really a great deal more that I'd think it well to tell, but can't. Show Mr. Blunston this letter."

Sarah felt that here was a strange mission, but she regarded its execution as a duty. Blunston, who made punctilious calls, would surely come to see her within a few days. Nevertheless, she decided to brave calling on him with Andy's letter. She dressed with unusual care, but made amends with herself by changing back from a becoming to an unbecoming hat.

The veteran war-correspondent, somewhat relieved of his doubts concerning the attitude of his protégé toward Minnie, had never regretted his sacrifice and had been delighted with Andy's story of the grand review, suffering, indeed, pangs of conscience when he appended his own name to it and sent it forth to its newspapers, after the manner in which he sent all of Andy's copy, as coming, for manifolding, through an agent in this country. He amazedly saw Sarah walk up the flower-bordered walk to the old house, and came out to meet her.

"We both ought to be proud of Andy," he said easily: he felt that there might be need of ease. "He is doing excellent work. I only think I oughtn't to take any of the credit for what . . ."

Sarah showed him the letter and indicated the mysterious paragraph. Blunston read it twice over.

"It is," he admitted, "a little . . . But probably the boy was only in a hurry. He wanted you to bring this to me because he hadn't time . . . You see, he says he hadn't."

In his heart he understood that Andy was beginning to doubt, or would soon begin to doubt, whether all was well with the management of the A. E. F., to know that the censorship would not pass a record of the facts giving rise to any such doubt, and to have taken this means of slipping some hint of the situation under censorial eyes prone to examine only the first and last lines of paragraphs.



Were there, ahead of Andy, troubles that, though Blunston might have adumbrated them, he had never really foreseen? How, if there were, would Andy meet them? He was, after all, only an inexperienced lad. Suppose that he defied them: how could he win his way through, and how, if he could not, could Blunston feel that he had done Andy aught but an ill turn through the sacrifice of his own ambitions in sending Andy abroad? Suppose—it had to be supposed—suppose that Andy succumbed: then, by surrendering his post, Blunston would have betrayed his journalistic trust, have failed in his duty to the public that had a right to information which might thus be suppressed.

Blunston himself had been seriously wondering about Washington's conduct of the war. Andy's message left him wondering.

## II

Sarah was a little uneasy. She felt that, though the circumstances were of one of those masculine sorts which no woman might understand, all was not quite well with her son, and, on her walk home, she sought refuge from the vague present in the certain past.

She was thinking, as she crossed her threshold, of Andy's earliest days. It was time, she saw by the hall-clock, that she begin to prepare the evening meal for her lodgers, yet she took a candle and climbed to the attic storeroom. There it was that, in the trunk her mother had packed for her daughter's wedding-journey, Sarah kept a pasteboard box bound with faded blue ribbon and labeled, in the girlish hand she had forgotten: "Andy's first short dress."

The light was poor. Her fingers fumbled the snow of dust; the key that she half-blindly selected from her household bunch grated in the lock to which she applied it. Not until she had lifted the resisting lid did she discover that she had opened the wrong receptacle and that what she was looking into was one of the never examined trunks which previously belonged to her father.

It was full of letters and the topmost one was endorsed:

"Wm. R. Bolingbroke *re* Tidd house."

Sarah was reading it before she became aware of her intention to do so:

"... and you have been entirely too kind to that shiftless family, letting them live there rent-free. They have shown their gratitude by calling the house their own, and if you let them stay much longer without any payment, it *will* become theirs by what our law calls the Right of Adverse Possession. . . . I can tell you that if Tidd doesn't shake a leg and pay what he owes *me*, I will proceed against him. . . ."

The writer, she knew, was Ralph's father, dead these many years. Had her own father, then, been owner of the house now lent to the Red Cross by that younger Bolingbroke whose wife had not asked Sarah to become a worker there? It would have been characteristic of her father's careless generosity to let such a piece of property slip through his fingers, and characteristic of his pride never to mention its loss; it was characteristic of her father's daughter this afternoon to bear no resentment because of her deprivation and yet to find silent satisfaction in the knowledge that the place she was barred from had once been her family's own.

She turned to another trunk. She found the pasteboard box and took out the little pale-blue shoes with pearly buttons. Her needle-roughened fingers smoothed timidly the tiny lace frock that lay beside them. She raised a bit of lace frilling and laid it against her sallow cheek. . . .

### III

It was eleven o'clock the next morning when she thought that perhaps Ralph Bolingbroke might like to have the letter: it was useless to her, but he might care for it because, antedating the common use of typewriters, it was in his father's hand. So again she put on her rusty best and went into the business-center of the town.

Ralph was not in the office of his umbrella-factory; his head-clerk thought his employer might be found at the Red Cross headquarters. Thither Sarah proceeded.

Only Mrs. Bolingbroke, bursting through her white uniform, was in the Tidd house. There was a fire in the grate of the big workroom and into this the pretty young chairman of the Americus chapter was tossing, by handfuls, the contents of a just-arrived packing-box.

She was raging. She had ordered Minnie Taylor to be here this morning and do some expected unpacking, but Minnie, afraid even to telephone, had sent word by a boy that she felt she ought to go into Doncaster to see the moving-pictures of Mr. Gerard's *My Four Years in Germany*: Mrs. Ralph rapped the unfortunate messenger's ears. Then, as if it were not enough to have to do the unpacking herself, this box sent in by the Juneville branch, and supposed to contain many-tailed bandages, had been labeled, by some impudent person who should suffer for it, "Freak Bandages," and contained swathings with odd numbers of tails. It was these that Mrs. Bolingbroke was flinging to the flames when Sarah entered.

For quite a second the caller stood unnoticed in the doorway. Then she uttered a conventional cough.

Mrs. Ralph looked up. "Well, Sarah," she said, "what do you want?"

At this use of her Christian name by a woman so much younger than herself, who, besides, scarcely knew her, Sarah's frame stiffened.

"I was looking for your husband, Mrs. Bolingbroke," she said. "They told me—"

"Well, he's not here. Look at these bandages: they're all wrong. Come on and get busy and help me burn them up."

It was, Sarah reflected, only Mrs. Ralph's way of speaking. She stooped to help and in so doing laid the letter on the floor beside her.

"What's that?" asked Mrs. Ralph.

"It's a letter I wanted to show your husband."

Mrs. Bolingbroke picked it up. "I'll do just as well," she

said: "I don't allow Ralph to have any secrets from me." She read it. Instantly she was on her feet. "What's all this about?" she demanded.

Sarah rose more slowly, but she rose. "It's just a letter that I thought—"

"That you thought you could threaten my husband with?" Mrs. Ralph's face was blazing. "A letter you thought'd make you out the owner of this house? What do you think we are, anyway?"

"Mrs. Bolingbroke," began the dumfounded Sarah, "how can you suppose—"

With a swift movement, the infuriated Mrs. Ralph flung the letter upon the fire, where it leaped into instant flame.

"There!" she shrieked. "That's how much I care about your old letter. Now, what are you going to do about it? Tell it if you dare, and I'll say there never was such a letter, and we'll see whose word they'll take!"

Sarah made no reply. She turned her back on the still raging Mrs. Ralph and left the Tidd house.

## CHAPTER X

### HATS OFF: THE FLAG!

THE nineteenth of January, 1918, is a date that America will remember, for it is a date on which American history was made.

For some time the hint of what was coming had run back and forth through the camp with waxing imperativeness. That camp had always been a maneuver-field for rumors, but those other rumors were generally short-lived, whereas this continued and grew. There were chance words that filtered downward from general and divisional headquarters, which could mean but one thing; there were preparations, premonitory movements of supply-trains and a gathering-together of impedimenta, which could have only a single significance. From the farthest huddle of damp huts on a sodden hillside to the last leaking loft in the last muddy village, the word passed among the enlisted men. They were shivering; they knew, as well as their no less neglected line-officers, what had happened to their uncertain training; yet, with the increasing assurance that they were finally to fight, eyes brightened, hope was renewed and that unflinching purpose on whose wings they had come to France blotted out the memory of every error of which they were the victims.

Early on the evening of the eighteenth, Chrissly found Léonie waiting for him in the shadow of the inn-yard's bulging wall. Excitement burned in his brown eyes and made his ruddy cheeks more ruddy; it partially stunned his recently acquired French.

"There is—I have a minute only—there is a thing that it is necessary—to say to you," he began.

Nobody was near; the cobbled yard, surrounded with its tiled and mossy buildings, was, save for this man and woman,

empty. In the last pale light of the winter's day, he devoured with hungry gaze her sinuous form; he saw her level eyes, but noted, too, the rapid rise and fall of her breasts that marked a breathing she could not control.

"I know it," she said: "to-morrow you go to fight; this time it is final."

He nodded. "*Our* outfit's sure to go."

"And you," she asked: "you want it?"

"Last year," said he, "I did not think that I should ever be glad to fight."

"But now you are glad, *hein?*"

"I am glad, Léonie."

A glint of mischief had remained in her. As it now leaped forth, it bent her red lips into a smile.

"Glad to leave your French friends that are here, is it not?"

"No, no!" Chrissly's hands wanted to go out toward her; he had to clench them at his sides. "My friends here—they are the one thing that makes me want to stay."

"More than does that Madame Chrissly in the United States?"

His hands darted toward her, then were stiffened again, with an effort, at his sides. "Please!" he begged. "I want to tell you—"

She had hurt him; she saw that. The smile disappeared, and, in its stead, her face was illuminated by a wonderful tenderness. She reached out and took his tight hands; her cold fingers uncoiled his, which were burning. When she had opened, she clasped them.

"You are my friend," she said; "all Americans are the friends of France, but of me you especially are my honest friend, and I am yours. Friends must not question each other, and they will not listen to explanations."

"But, Léonie—" He was possessed by the idea that he ought to tell her about Minnie Taylor.

She released one of his hands and commanded silence by putting pink fingers on his mouth.

"It is enough," she said, "that we are friends." Confusion lowered his glance, and so he could not see the high sorrow

that was in her steady gaze. "That is enough," she continued.—Somewhere a bugle sounded through the raw twilight.—"Go," she concluded, "and fight for France."

Before he could answer her, she had disappeared.

## II

It happened as he had said. Next morning he was marching, and half the soldiers of the wide-flung camp.

To see those villages and the folk in them was to see a poignant demonstration of what, in that crisis, her western sister meant to France. As Chrissly's regiment swung out of the hamlet in which it had been billeted, the people—they were only old men and children and women—packed the narrow sidewalks in a solid mass from curb to cottage-walls. Long *crêpe* veils there were, which mourned relatives or lovers sacrificed to the common cause. In timid hands, little boys and girls waved tiny American flags. Back of them were time-twisted gaffers, their gnarled fists shaking their hats high in air; their faces were transfigured as by youth miraculously returned. Housewives and young girls, some bare to the weather, others with only shawls or knitted black capes about their fragile shoulders, raised tremulous fingers that would shut out a picture recalling the memory of those marches from which their own menfolk had never returned; yet the fingers paused before their hearts, and their eyes, through a haze of tears, glowed with exultation. There was not a closed mouth in all the tossing crowd: their voices—the piping treble, the broken bass, the sobbing soprano—merged in a continuous cheer.

Chrissly tried to obey orders and walk with eyes front, but he did not succeed. As the regiment swung rhythmically up the street, he looked from side to side. He was looking for Léonie.

She was not in the laughing group at the entrance to the inn, but he said to himself that she would be beside the inn-yard gate.

She was not at the gate, and his heart failed him.

Then, a hundred yards farther on, he saw her.

She had sought a place alone. She was the last of the crowd, standing at the door of a deserted house. She stood erect, with her splendid head high: he could see the straight line of her tawny throat above her short cape, her firm chin. Her lips had the smile of yesterday, and, though her face was pale, in her eyes shone triumph.

She waved her hand. . . . He had a quick flash of her whole figure, full-bodied and well-corseted, the black apron over her short skirt, the slightly reddened hands, the deep color in her mobile face, the thick coils of her black hair neatly piled high and held with large shell pins, her luminous eyes shining with sorrow: was the sorrow for him or for France?

She was gone. The relentless march had left her behind.

But he knew now what her heart was saying. It was saying:

"Somehow—for whatever reason you came here and whoever else may elsewhere claim you—you are marching for me!"

### III

It was a gray land on a gray day. The barren fields stretched eastward under a bleak and humid sky. From out that way, fighting through the dense atmosphere, came now the rumble of the endless battles' guns. Behind the soldiers the road ran straight and slushy between its miles of poplars; forward, it entered the very gates of death.

Gun-carriages crawled along, the steel tubes of the field-artillery dull in the scanty light, the wheels heavy with clogging masses of blue clay, the wagon-tongues creaking, the mules straining, the drivers cracking whips and curses. The infantry, at route-step, marched with feet mud-shod, their 'American faces at odd variance with their English helmets, the steam rising in clouds from their soaking uniforms.

Whenever they passed through a village, cottagers crowded about them. These later villages were in partial ruin; they had been under fire: the old men cheered and stamped their wooden shoes, the women seized the soldiers' hands; girls ran out to embrace them; children brought them bunches of ever-



greens; babies in arms were held up for a kiss; what remnants of food were left these people, these they pressed upon the passing men.

At every halt the soldiers showed their nationality. It was evident in their ready laughter, in the ingenuity with which they found the best modes of resting themselves against the efforts they were eager to renew; it was most evident in the leanness and keenness of their youth, in the high cheek-bones that predominated, and in the tight American mouth, at once humorous and brave. Here, as back there, was no bragging when they came to pause, no rude assurance: only a very certain, though very quiet determination. They talked to one another and rolled cigarettes, just as their doubles used to do at home before a sham-battle at a National Guard encampment.

In every village the world over there are loose women; in every regiment of every army there are blackguards; but here and now, in these villages and in these regiments, the civilians that were grateful were simply grateful, and the young soldiers that looked like tattered heroes behaved like gentlemen.

#### IV.

For a long time, Chrissy's head was too full of thoughts for any one to develop. He thought of his short, previous endurance of the trenches; of the farm at home and how pleasant it would be to be there; of his father and mother—a thought that he tried not to dwell on; of Minnie Taylor—a thought that he endeavored to expel; he thought of the religion in which he had been reared, and how it taught that any war was a work of the devil; he thought of the great cause now at stake and the sacrifice that, if necessary, he would make for it, and he thought a good deal more than he thought right of Léonie. There was not much order to his thoughts, but they served to barricade him against the comments of the veteran again marching beside him, of whom he had grown weary.

At the rests, on that latter day, he learned things about the

men of his company that he had never, even on their trial-trip to the trenches, heard from them before. In a quiet way, they became more talkative than the intimacies of the camp and that shock of their first brief trench-experience had made them. Their feet were on the ultimate threshold, and they spoke, without regret it is true, but with a new freedom, of things concerning which they had been silent.

Here was a lad that had been working his way through Harvard, starving himself in a garret, waiting on table in a students' boarding-house, because he wanted to be a teacher; the brutal fist of Berlin had descended, its fingers uncoiled and then closed upon American prerogatives, and the boy forever forewent his dream, put aside his ambitions, sacrificed what he had sacrificed so much to gain—and volunteered. His frugal life, his years of self-denial, even his conscious meannesses and skimpings—they seemed to Chrissly's slow eyes to form a visible halo about him; and yet it was a halo of which he stood in patient ignorance. Chrissly regarded him now with a sort of awe; why, he called the Harvard lad "Dickie," and there was no difference between them!

There was an older man, the husband of a wife, the father of a family in New Jersey. He had closed up a business that he had just succeeded in clearing from debt—closed it because he knew his country needed him. Somehow, in spite of all that Chrissly knew to the contrary, he felt as if the virtue of what this older man had done, and the love of those he had left at home, must surely now go forward with him and form about him a bullet-proof network—must do so, or else there was no justice in the eternal scheme.

There was every type that was to be seen back home in Americus. Chrissly heard a boy that looked like the youthful Baptist tell, without bitterness, a story:

"They say a fellow that came out here in the commissary department as a major, got sick and went to a Paris specialist. The specialist said:

"'Your brain needs cleaning. It needs a regular house-cleaning, and that'll take two weeks.'

"So the doctor took out the man's brain and scrubbed it

and oiled it and got it goin' fine. And then he went after his patient and found him down here at camp.

"'Here's your brain,' said the specialist. 'I've got it all fixed up fine for you now, and it'll work just right.'

"But the owner of that brain, he just gave one look at it, and he says:

"'Oh, that!' he says. 'I don't need that; you see, I'm a general now.'"

He laughed at his own joke, this boy, and he nudged his companions; but Chrissly wondered how he could laugh—now. Out there, just a few miles away, across the lines, there might, at this instant, be waiting, in some soldier's belt, a steel-tipped bullet that was destined—perhaps a week hence, perhaps to-night—to find its way into this lad's heart. . . .

Among all his comrades Chrissly heard only one that complained, and his was a complaint not for the speaker's own sake, but for his country's honor. It came from a man in whose dark hair there were already streaks of gray, a solid man, clearly; in civil life, a man of slow but sure mental processes.

"Well," he said, as he looked at such of his fellows as were visible, "there aren't many of us. After we've been at war for nine months, we've got this many ready for fighting. I call it a pretty cheesy effort."

"I know I'll get mine," another man contended. "It's out there somewhere." He nodded toward the darkening east, whence came a rumble of unseen guns. "I know I'll get mine, but I don't care, so long as I get it right an' ain't just a cripple."

He was an unemotional man, but the moment was one for confidences.

"You see," he presently added, "there's a girl back there in Bellows' Falls. She said I wasn't any good. I want to be some good—and I just want her to know I was, after all."

## V

Momentarily, during the last hours of waiting, there waxed in Chrissly, and no doubt in all, the horror of conjec-

ture as to the fate before them. Once a white-haired villager, who must have remembered 1870, looked at them and murmured "*Mes pauvres enfants*" and shook his head.

"What's that guy callin' us?" asked Chrissly's nearest neighbor.

Chrissly was prompt: "He's sayin' we're brave a'ready."

## VI

Sturdy boys with resolute faces; mature men who had shut up shop to come here: here they were, their idealism rekindled, their purpose reinvigorated, because they were at length to have the chance to fight.

The January darkness grew suddenly deeper. The bugles sounded. The men approached their destined positions. A moment later and there came, from two directions, the adjutant's call.

A great anger rose to Chrissly's once rural brain: anger against a sham civilization that permitted a Prussian militarism and made possible this slaughter called war. What was this poor bank-clerk from St. Louis to the kaiser? Why should a von Hindenburg demand the life of that truckman from the Boston docks? What part in the *Welte politik* could yonder puddler from Pittsburg possibly play?

Somehow he could not help detaching his own thoughts from himself to dwell on those of his comrades. He knew whither, through the glow of the winter twilight, their thoughts had gone. They had gone to mothers, wives and sweethearts in quiet American towns, to American homesteads and American ways, to the great, bungling, busy, loving, erratic chaos that we cherish and will die for and that we call the United States of America. . . .

Again the bugle shrilled into the dark.

"Fall in!"

They were already there—the double lines of them, the long narrow packs on their backs, two lines of them rising out of the night and passing into it again.

"Right dress—right dress—right dress!"

The order passed along. The men shuffled in the mud, the lines straightened, stiffened, the soldiers stood erect and still.

"Front!"

Well, for them and him, it had come to this. All their love and longing, all their business deals and drudgery and economies—all their hopes and fears had come to this night in France, to the mud, the wet and the cold—and the trenches, and not a man of them was visibly sorry.

It was ghastly; it was horrible. But it was heroic, and it was splendid.

"Report!"

Corporal after corporal responded for his squad. Every soldier was present or accounted for.

There came a horrid pause.

Then, far up the line, an indistinguishable order sounded. It was repeated a little nearer at hand. It was repeated still nearer. It came to Chrissly's own company, clear at last and challenging. Then it passed on in echoes down the ranks until it was engorged by the night:

"Squads right—march!"

Their rifles went to their shoulders. They turned—by rows of four they turned—and swung off eastward toward those distant growling guns—swung off on their way to fight.

## VII

Innis and a little group of correspondents stood there watching them—squad after squad, platoon after platoon, company after company—until these, too, like the order that started them, had been swallowed by the dark.

The newspaper-men thought of what they had seen in Flanders and upon the Somme; they thought of all the incompetence and brutality of war.

Away over there in America, across the night-swathed sea, in hundreds and hundreds of houses, houses rich and houses poor, old women and young were dreading this moment and praying for those men who had just now passed by. Did they know that the hour had come, these women? Did some

mental current bring them the message over the trackless leagues?

Here, in a cottage kitchen, a French woman was singing at her work. Some one said that of her four sons three had been killed in this war and the fourth driven mad. It was to be wondered how such a woman could sing—how any woman could sing now. And then there came clearly the words of her plaintive refrain:

*“La guer-re,  
C’est la misèr-e!”*

The song ceased. There was no longer any sound of marching men. The place knew them no more.

## CHAPTER XI

### HOW POLITICIANS CAN EAT THEIR CAKE AND HAVE IT

"THANKS," said McGregor, "I'm as comfortable as a man *can* be in a European hotel. I struck a sort of deputy-manager here that used to work at the Annex: he learned a lot there, and he's open to instruction."

McGregor looked very comfortable indeed. The vast pink-and-gilt parlor of his suite, which he used as a sitting-room, warmly overlooked a chill Place Vendôme and was all the more pleasant because of the contrast with its prospect. His armchair, stuffed with cushions, was drawn beside a window, and at his elbow was a table laden with the morning's papers, scarcely ten days old, from America. McGregor was in slippers and his flowered-silk dressing-gown, it being not yet noon; the sleeves of the dressing-gown reached to his knuckles, and its open collar climbed, on each side, almost to his pouched eyes.

Andy, pale and nervous, sat uneasily opposite. From the cigar that McGregor had given him by way of welcome, he was trying to flick ashes more rapidly than they accumulated.

Although a telegram at his rooms had informed him of Sylvia's brief return to Paris, the boy came first to the Ritz. There was still duty to be done, still one more assurance to make doubly sure: he meant to act frankly and directly, but he found it exceedingly hard to dislike his sybaritic acquaintance, and harder still to expose the suspicions that should have made dislike imperative. Therefore, he had begun his conversation by asking McGregor a wholly unnecessary question as to how he fared.

"You look as if things were pretty easy," said Andy.

"Thanks again," said McGregor. His little eyes regarded his caller reflectively. "That pretty Miss Raeburn's back," he added.

Andy blushed. "So I hear."

"Yes," McGregor resumed. "I had a pleasant talk with her yesterday. Met her near your press-headquarters.—You don't mind, do you?"

Andy flicked at his cigar. "Me? Why, no. Why should I?"

"I dunno," said McGregor. "I just thought you might, that's all. I rather like the little lady. You see, I'm a lonely kind of a fellow, especially in Paris, my son. What have *you* been doing?"

"I've been down at the camp. We're in, you know."

"Yes," said McGregor. He puffed two slow columns of smoke.

"They wouldn't let us see anything but the march-out." There was annoyance in the tone.

"Oh, well, I wouldn't worry. They know their business."

Andy's whole face was on fire. "That's just what I'm not so sure of."

"I guess they don't want anything printed," said McGregor. His eyes never left Andy's face.

"Why don't they?" challenged Andy.

"Well, they don't want the Germans tipped off."

"It's not that. One side always knows these things as well as another." Andy took a great breath. "My last trip down there, I looked into conditions pretty carefully. Let me tell you what I saw."

He told it all—up to his visit to the aviation centers. He piled fact on damning fact, McGregor watching him the while without blinking.

"That's what's been going on at the camp and back home," Andy concluded: "waste. We've wasted time and money. Now, if we're not careful, we're going to waste lives."

"Well," said McGregor, "this is war, my son."

"Then all the more reason why we shouldn't be wasteful. If we're going to throw everything away, we'll be whipped."

McGregor lit a fresh cigar from its unfinished predecessor. When he now spoke, it was from behind a gray cloud:

"Everything's wasteful, if you look at it one way. They say Nature isn't, but just look at the way she made the ele-



phant: practically two tails and yet a skin so thick it can't feel the flies."

"I—" Andy gripped the arms of his chair. "I was at Tours and Issoudun, too," he said.

The smoke-cloud grew thicker. McGregor did not answer.

"The aviation centers," said Andy. He was pale again, now. Still McGregor did not reply.

"You said you were interested in aviation contracts, didn't you?" asked Andy.

"This cigar don't draw," McGregor's high voice complained. He bent to examine the mischief. "Yes, I'm interested in aviation. But I'm not actively looking for work, if that's what you mean. You know what the tramp said when the lady asked him if he was looking for work: he said, 'Oh, it's not so bad as that; I'm just *waitin'* for it.'"

He chuckled. To Andy's suspicious ears, the chuckle did not ring clear. An anger seized the boy.

He spoke of American flesh and blood at that moment the more exposed to German shells and gas because the Americans had no aeroplanes to drive away the scouting planes of the enemy. He asked how long, by our aircraft's inactivity, we, the richest and least hampered of the warring nations, were to continue adding to the heartbreaking load of our Allies. He forgot his embarrassment and his inveterate liking for the man before him, and demanded a knowledge of what had been done with the \$640,000,000 appropriated for aerial work.

"Half the casualties that happen in the Toul sector will be due to the fact that we haven't got a plane of our own. Anybody that's seen a little bit of this war knows that," he declared. "And anybody that knows how things are over here, knows there's been failure, somewhere—and probably dishonesty."

McGregor's eyes were again on duty. They watched Andy firmly through all that he said.

"Well—my son," the contractor asked, when Andy had made an end, "supposing all this is true, what are you going to do about it?"

"I'm going to get it home, and get it printed."

McGregor gestured with a plump hand toward a japanned humidor on the table. "Your cigar's out; have another."

The cigar in Andy's fingers was not only extinguished; it was broken. "No, thanks," he said: "not now."

McGregor settled himself more deeply in the cushions. His face became as concerned as it was possible for such a face to become.

"I wouldn't try to print all this stuff," he said. "Honest, I wouldn't try it, Brown."

Andy's anger had expended itself in utterance, and, though his purpose was fixed, his incongruous liking for McGregor returned to conscious force.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Well, in the first place, if the M. I. got wind of it, they wouldn't let the papers print it, and if the papers did print it, it wouldn't ever get over here anyhow: they'd just stop the papers in the mails."

"It isn't getting the thing over here I care about," said Andy.

"I thought you might be wanting to please somebody in the French government."

"I guess the French government knows all about it already and is sick enough over it. Haven't we been trying to buy planes from them? The people I want to tell this to are the American people."

McGregor shook his head. "You'll just get yourself in wrong with the censorship."

"I don't care about that. They've treated us to a good deal of rough-house. I don't mean all the fellows in it—some of them are as white as anybody. I mean the whole censorship. It's un-American. It's—I don't care how wrong I get in with it."

"You'd ought to. You've got to get on in the world. What's the use of spoiling everything at the start?"

"I don't care about that, either," said Andy—"not when such a thing as this is concerned."

"But you'll be sent home—in disgrace—and where'll be your usefulness then?"

Andy swallowed a lump that was in his throat and answered: "There'll be plenty of men to take my job."

"And nobody'll make a hero of you, son."

"I hadn't supposed anybody would!"

"Then" — McGregor was plainly puzzled — "what's your game, anyhow?"

"My game? Why, I want to help win this war. I want the people to know what's wrong, so's they can stop it."

"Oh!" McGregor showed relief. "And do you really think you'd get that across if you printed this news?"

"I think it would help."

"My boy, you've got a lot to learn. I've been making American public opinion, or bucking it, all my life. We're a people of change; we change all we have, and as soon as we've changed everything, we change our minds. The folks back home would be hot about this for a week, then the baseball season'd open, or we'd take a German trench, and nobody'd remember to ask what had been done about aeroplanes."

Andy squirmed a little.

"Excuse me," said McGregor. He took a pad from the table and scribbled with the gold pencil attached to it. "Just a little business matter," he explained. He asked Andy to ring and ordered the answering servant: "Send that message."

"Am I taking too much of your time?" asked Andy, when the man had gone.

McGregor moved his shoulders still deeper into the cushions. "You haven't taken half enough." He tossed his cigar into a convenient ash-tray and put the stubby fingers of his right hand tip to tip with those of his left. "You haven't really brought the fellow I'm most interested in into your conversation yet."

"Who do you mean?" asked Andy.

"Your friend: myself. Go on. Shoot."

Andy bit his lips.

"It's hard?"

"Yes, it is," said Andy. "You've always been so decent to me—"

"Never mind that. I never let business interfere with

friendship, or friendship with business. There's no reason why anything you think you've got to write should hurt our personal relations. Go ahead."

"Well," gulped Andy, "how are you mixed up in all this?"

McGregor chuckled, and this time there was no doubt of the chuckle's genuineness. "When seen at his palatial residence in the Ritz," he continued, "Mr. B. Frank McGregor said that he had nothing to say."

"I had to ask you," said Andy.

"Sure." McGregor lit a third cigar. "So that's settled," said he. "Now, I want to give you a few pointers." He pulled at the cigar. "Andy, how old are you?"

Andy felt his blushes return. "I'm over twenty-one," he said, defensively.

"Are you? Well, you wouldn't guess it, but *I'm* over fifty. Thirty years makes a difference, son."

"Perhaps," said Andy, "sometimes."

"Certainly and always," said McGregor. "Now, I've seen a little more of life than you, and I want to give you some advice—just like your father might. I'm not talking for my sake. I can take care of myself, whatever you do; and whatever you do, I'm going to be your friend. So I'm talking for your sake. Very well. I won't try to tell you how you'll hurt yourself if you go ahead on all this exposure stuff, because you say you don't care; I don't believe you do. D'you ever hear about that little boy whose Sunday-school teacher asked him what kind of little boys went to Heaven? He said the kind of little boys that went to Heaven were dead ones—and I guess you'd be willing to die if you had to die to do right; but what I want to show you is that what's right for one day, may be wrong for the whole year!"

"I don't understand," said Andy uncomfortably.

"Well, you're an accredited correspondent of the army. You can argue it any way you want to, but if you get over with a story the censorship don't approve, you'll not be playing fair with your credentials."

"The censorship hasn't played fair with me."

"Does it matter?" asked McGregor, looking at him steadily.

Andy considered this. "No, I don't suppose it does."

"Well, then?"

"Then—then I can resign."

"You can resign? Ye—es. But anyhow, you've got to look at the bigger things. We're the biggest country on earth, and the richest and the bravest; and we're fighting for democracy. I used to tell my audiences that every time I made a speech before the draft, and I stumped 'most all Illinois and Indiana, too. We've got our faults and we make mistakes, same as anybody; but our faults don't keep us from being big and rich, and it won't make us any braver, or fight any better, to call attention to our mistakes."

"I think it will," said Andy. He believed it would, and he had to say so.

McGregor went on:

"You've seen a few things, and they're bad—. None of this is for publication, mind you."

"Certainly not," said Andy.

"You've seen a few bad things, then, but maybe, if you were my age, you'd see more that weren't. That's the way with everything. I've put up office buildings in my time: there was never one I didn't find mistakes being made by the masons, the steel construction men, the plumbers—especially the plumbers. We'd get poor material, skimped work. Even the architect'd make errors—in fact, *he* always did—things like putting a staircase where no staircase could be. But I never expected the thing to be built as if it was a kid's house built out of blocks. It was all along going to be an office building, and it always ended by being an office building and not a stable. Well, it's the same here. Just exactly. We're fighting for democracy, and we won't win for autocracy. We'll come through quicker if we don't stop to quarrel over details. It's the big things that count, Andy: you keep your eyes on them, and you'll be giving the best help you can to yourself and your country, too. I tell you this with my hand on my heart"—McGregor put it there—"that what we've got in view, we people on the inside, is something that's larger than the sum of its parts. Just give America a chance."

He got up, pillows slipping to the floor around him, and Andy understood that he was at last to go. There was no leisure granted for the answers that seemed ready to this appeal.

"Think it over," said McGregor, patting the boy's shoulders. "Just think it over a bit."

"I'll do that, Mr. McGregor; but I know I won't change my mind."

"Maybe you will. That's one thing no man can be sure of till he's dead—like the kind of little boys that go to Heaven, you know. Whatever you do, we'll stay friends, you and me, —personally. But just you take a day or two more to think it over."

## II

He had not long been reseated before Garcia was announced. The lieutenant looked tired and harried.

"Your man just telephoned for me," he said.

"I haven't seen you for three days," returned McGregor, letting his caller stand. "Where've you been?"

"Down at the camp, Mr. McGregor. You remember I told you I'd have to go down there—that our men were going in."

"You didn't say there were going to be any reporters there."

"I didn't think there would be."

"Humph. Well, they'll keep on getting the better of you till you learn how to treat them, Garcia. I don't know which is a worse failure: that 'Hello, Bill' pose of yours that don't fool anybody, or the rough stuff that only makes you enemies. When'd you get back?"

"Only a couple of hours ago."

McGregor looked at him, but this was not at all the sort of McGregor that had contemplated Andy. "Hear of any aviation stories lately?"

"No, sir."

"Yes, you did!"

Garcia's protruding eyes were those of a wild animal, cowed, but malevolent. "I did hear—"

"There's an aviation story that'll go out, if we aren't careful," McGregor interrupted. "Young Brown's got the goods."

"That damned boy's been everywhere, the—"

"Don't call him names: he put one over on you, all right. Why didn't you tell me he'd been to Tours?"

Garcia could not understand why he was not permitted to abuse Andy: "He sneaked it."

"There you are! I said he put one over on you. You're not working very hard to earn my hard-earned money, Lieutenant. Now"—McGregor half rose from his chair: "you know I don't cry over spilled milk, but you know the pull I've got, too. You've got to fix this thing up, see?"

Garcia visibly quailed. "Yes, sir."

"Don't try any more rough stuff with Brown unless you have to—he's a nice kid, and he's smart: I like him. Smooth him down somehow."

"How shall I smooth him, Mr. McGregor?"

The contractor thought of his own failure in that direction; but he did not tell Garcia why he chuckled. A second later he was more serious than ever, frowning like a fat, but none the less terrible, Zeus.

"That's what I hire you to know," he said. "This is my last word on the whole subject. If anything of this sort happens again, by the Lord God, I'll see to it you go back to the line—and into the trenches. Good morning."

### III

Andy was nearly heartbroken. There was not much left of the pride, the soaring hopes and the heroic enthusiasms that he had brought with him to France and once thought a part of his being. The cynical joke of his "credentials" and the press-division's derision of the press; the neglect practised on the enlisted men, the strain upon the liaison, the collapse of the air program, the failure to reach the general, and now the virtual confirmation of Evans' charges against McGregor: any one of these things might not so much have mattered, but the cumulation of the symptoms indicated the

presence of a fatal disease—and from that disease how was the American cause to recover? A miracle of reenforcements and then a second miracle of open fighting: such twin marvels could alone bear the chance of a cure.

Innis came to town that day, and Andy and Evans saw him. He gave them such details of the march-out as they had missed, and all three wrote their accounts and turned them in to the press-division's offices. They were promised word of the date when the manuscripts would be mailed to America.

Only then did Andy allow himself to see Sylvia, and to her, almost as a child to its mother, and certainly as a boy to his patron saint, he told of everything that he had seen and experienced since their separation. He did it as they walked far out into the Bois.

She heard him with that dear familiar pucker of her pure brows: the world was not all as it should be.

"What will you do?" she asked him.

"Write it, of course: I've got to."

"Yes, that. But about what Mr. McGregor said to you?"

"Thinking it over? That's what we're doing now! But I told him I wouldn't change my mind."

"No; I meant about your credentials: it mightn't be quite fair to do something the military censorship wouldn't approve of, so long as you had War Department credentials."

"I guess I've done some such things already."

"But now you know; and you've had time to consider." Her eyes showed the clarity of her moral vision.

"Yes," he said, "that's kind of the way it struck me when McGregor mentioned it. What would *you* do?"

"Oh," she smiled wistfully, "please don't ask my advice!"

Andy's glance was a wide appeal. "I've got to."

"Please," pleaded she.

"Please," he pleaded.

"Well," she said, "if I were in your place—of course, I'm not, and so I don't know half so much about it as you do—"

"You see things straight."

"Then I'd resign the credentials and write the article and then go on with my work without credentials."



He still valued them. It had been so much to him to get them that they still retained something of their shallow glory that made them difficult of surrender.

"I guess you're right," he nevertheless said. "McGregor—I just can't help liking him, but he can somehow think one thing and act another. *I* can't. I'll do as you say."

"Oh, not *because* I say it!" she hurriedly interposed.

"No," said Andy, with a heavy sigh—"only because it's right. But it was you showed me it was right—really," he smilingly added. "I didn't feel it so much at McGregor's. No, I'll do it because it's the decent thing. I'll write to the censorship this evening."

She patted his arm by way of congratulation, and Andy felt that, great as was his sacrifice, it was paid far beyond its deserts.

"I knew you'd do it," she said. Then she thought. "But you don't have to give the censorship here any warning; you don't owe them that." Since she was to be an adviser, she would advise in full. "The credentials came from the War Department in Washington, didn't they?"

He nodded.

"Then I should think the resignation ought to go to the War Department in Washington, too."

So, that night, Andy dropped into a French post-office in the rue Vivienne his resignation. It was addressed to the secretary of war.

#### IV.

Then, about the correspondents' articles telling of the fact that America was really fighting, nothing happened. Nothing happened for days.

Innis made inquiries and reported to Andy and Evans the result. He met them of an afternoon at the Napolitain:

"They say nobody's story's to be released—not even the cabled stuff—till the official communiqué's issued."

Andy thought this seemed reasonable.

Evans sniffed. "Too reasonable to be the real reason," said he.

"Garcia says he wants to see you about something, Brown," Innis continued. "I don't advise you to go."

They agreed to wait and to act in concert.

In his account of the march-out, along with reflections that he haltingly permitted himself and glimpsing records of the feelings inspired in him by what he saw, he had made some references to conditions; it was about these, he fancied, that Garcia wanted to see him. Meanwhile his duty to write and send all the hard facts was slowly acquitted. In his Palais Royal garret he passed long hours, pounding his typewriter, composing, revising, correcting. He wanted to be fair, and yet he wanted to be thorough: it was hard work and ungrateful. When it was finished, he consulted Evans about sending it safely to America, and that correspondent, with the go-to-hell stare in which he performed all his many kindnesses, offered to send it by a messenger.

"Six or seven of us use one whenever we hear of anybody going home," he said, "and this fellow's taking stuff for the crowd."

Thus Andy sent his report to Blunston.

## V

All France was saying that the Americans were in the battle-line—but the correspondents' stories of the entry were not released. One day the Paris papers printed the statement that the news had been told by a French general to his troops in Salonica—but the correspondents still waited.

"What's wrong?" Evans demanded of Innis. "Here's old Colonel Gaedeke writing about it in the *Bremen Zeitung*. All the people in the world know the Americans are in except the people of America. Our Allies are told, our enemies are told, but the United States must not be told."

Then came the news that the Germans had raided American trenches—and still no American communiqué appeared.

This last was too much. Evans dragged Andy and Innis from their work, and the three of them assaulted the *bureau*

in the rue Ste. Anne. A new and unknown lieutenant was at Garcia's desk when they entered. At a desk at the other end of the room sat another lieutenant busily reading proof, a monkish-looking man whom Andy had likewise never seen before, but who, Evans whispered, was Tarnow of *The Stars and Stripes*. The three correspondents stalked up to Garcia's desk.

"When are you going to release our stories?" demanded Evans.

The new lieutenant leaned back in his swivel-chair and clasped one trim knee with both hands. He had thin red wrists.

"I haven't heard any orders about it, gentlemen," said he. He smiled. Perhaps he should not have smiled.

"When the Last Day comes," said Evans, "Gabriel'll have to give an extra toot for the American censorship. Everybody knows we're in except our own people back home. Why are you holding it up?"

"I'm obeying orders," said the new censor.

"A nice mess you'll get us into with our papers."

"That isn't anything in my young life."

Andy thought that Evans was going to strike the fellow. Tarnow, he noticed, did not lift his eyes from the proof he held.

"Why are all you censors going around here in mental mother-hubbards and intellectual slippers down-at-the-heel?" Evans shouted. "I want my story back: I'm going to send it *un-censored*!"

"I can't give you back your story," said the lieutenant. "It's locked up in the safe, and I don't know the combination."

"Of course not," said Evans: "they wouldn't let you know so much. Don't know the combination—this sure is some Intelligence Section!"

Over at the farther desk, Lieutenant Tarnow dropped his proofs and noisily rose. Andy saw that he was a middle-aged dark man with a pale face and deep-set eyes. His thin dark hair was cropped close and, with his face now turned toward

the correspondents, he had even a more monkish appearance than when he had been sitting at the desk.

"What's the matter, anyhow?" he asked.

"That's *our* question," said Evans. Innis plucked at his sleeve, but was shaken off. "Why aren't you going to let the American papers tell the American people that their boys are fighting?"

Tarnow disregarded him and spoke to Innis:

"We've done the best we could for you—but no communiqué's to be issued."

It was unbelievable: the news "was not to go to the papers until the communiqué appeared"—and no communiqué was to appear!

Tarnow had come forward to the flat-topped desk and stood behind it by the side of the new lieutenant. Andy was opposite, ready to seize the hard-breathing Evans. Innis took two steps forward.

"Here," said he, "is a cable for my magazine." He held out a slip of flimsy paper to Tarnow. "Read it. It calls on the editor to make a protest direct to the president—and not any secret protest, but a public one. I'm through. I'm going to send that message, and nobody dares stop me."

As if mechanically, Tarnow picked up the paper. It rattled as he did so. He did not read it. His somber eyes were fixed on Evans, and Andy, whose attention had been distracted from his friend by the production of the cable-message, now saw that there was need: Evans was purple with rage. He leveled a finger at Tarnow.

"You're a bunch of dirty crooks!" he cried.

Andy seized him as he lurched forward. The new lieutenant hopped to a window and became intently engrossed in the prospect of a roof and a blank wall. Innis barred Evans' progress with an outflung arm.

"Leave this to me, Owen," he said, over his shoulder.

"Keep quiet, Evans!" whispered Andy.

But Innis was now in nearly as great need of restraint. He leaned over the desk. He protruded his chin, and, as he spoke, his thick-set frame shook.

"I'm going to send that," he reiterated, nodding toward the cable-message, which still fluttered from Tarnow's hand. "You tell us there isn't going to be any communiqué, and we know there wasn't ever one that said our boys came out of the trenches in the autumn. Do you mean your gang's keeping the American people in the dark? You mean you want the folks at home to think American soldiers have been fighting ever since their experimental experience at the front last November? Is your game to make our public think there hasn't been any gap between that step in training and this real beginning?" He raised his fist.

Andy laid a firm hold of Evans.

Innis took a fresh breath and went on:

"It is plain what you fellows are after. You announced to the American public that we had such-and-such 'fighting men' in France; you meant the term fighting men to be interpreted as 'men that are fighting'—and to back this up you are now pretending that we've been fighting continuously ever since last autumn." He shook his fist. "Tell me now: isn't that the game?"

Andy almost loosed his hold of Evans. Innis's words rang deafeningly in his ears; they dazzled his eyes by their astounding revelation. If it was true, as Andy was convinced it was, then it explained much that had heretofore been inexplicable in the affairs of the A. E. F.

"You've all—all put up bonds—or your papers have," Tarnow said. "If you aren't careful, you'll forfeit them."

He was answered by a volley.

"Then we'll buy the truth cheap!" said Innis.

Evans tugged against Andy's restraining arm: "To hell with the bonds!"

"You can't touch mine," panted Andy, between struggles with his prisoner. "I've resigned my credentials."

"Give me back that cable," said Innis. "I'm going out to send it."

Tarnow glanced toward his subordinate; but that officer remained intent in his contemplation of the roof. Then something else became immediately manifest: Tarnow saw that

Evans was secured by Andy and that Andy was secure by reason of his restraint of Evans. On these two, then, his wrath descended. He answered Innis's demand for the cable-message by dropping that on the desk, the preceding accusation he evaded by firmly attacking in words the men that, he was assured, could not attack him with their fists.

"A lot we care for your resignation!" he shouted. "We'll get your money anyhow. We'll get *you*—we *have* got you. Don't either of *you* try anything." He stepped back toward his desk with every phrase he uttered; but with every phrase his voice rose higher. "We've got your last stories locked up in our safe. They read just as if you saw that march-out, and we can prove you took the night-train to Paris. If you two try to make any trouble, we'll get the Committee on Public Information, back home, to blow you up for fakers."

As he finished, he hurriedly sat down at his desk and buried his face in his copy, as a signal of dismissal. At that moment the door opened and Garcia's woolly head appeared.

"Reenforcements!" shouted Evans.

They forgot Tarnow, against whom they had nothing personally; they forgot the lieutenant at the window, and directed their entire anger against the newcomer. Garcia, seeing the rage in their faces, sprang back in a panic. He banged the door shut after him. From the room beyond there came the click of a key.

He was none too soon. Andy released Evans, and both charged forward.

Tarnow did not lift his head. The new censor turned round with upraised arms:

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Evans.

Innis was regaining his composure.

"Come on, Owen," said he. "What do you care?"

"I *don't* care." He glowered at Tarnow's motionless back. "Nothing they can do to Brown's story or mine can make fakes of 'em: they're legitimate newspaper-stories, both of 'em." Wholly balked by the amazing exit of Garcia, Evans

was himself somewhat calmer. "But I'd just like to tell that skunk what I think of him."

Andy's anger died in a smile. "Well," said he, "you know what happens to you if you try to talk to a skunk."

"Look here"—Innis was addressing the new lieutenant now: "tell headquarters we'll give it twenty-four hours to issue a communiqué and release our stories. If it doesn't come across, I'll send this cable"—he picked up his message—"and we'll all of us get the news over anyhow. They can't jail us till we've done that."

The lieutenant bowed acknowledgment and relief.

"You're going?" he asked.

"We sure are," said Evans.

"I think Lieutenant Garcia wants to see Mr. Brown."

"Then," said Andy, "let Mr. Garcia come to my rooms: he knows my address."

But he went out in a daze. . . . How, surrounded by such quacks, could democracy ever triumph over the disease that their ministrations fostered?

## VI

In the hallway, Evans walked to a door that they knew must communicate with the room into which Garcia had fled. Evans seized the handle.

"I'll just give him an extra scare. Of course the careful man's locked himself in." He tried to turn the handle. "It is locked!" he grinned. He gave the thing a parting shake.

## VII

Going toward the provost-marshal's office was an orderly with several sheets of paper in his grasp. They were, he said, in answer to Innis's question, the lists of the recently killed and wounded at the American front. He would not give them up, but Andy and Evans looked over his shoulder while Innis argued with him. Andy saw the words:

"Wounded in action. . . . Degree undetermined. . . .  
Christian Shuman. . . ."

## CHAPTER XII

### CHRISSLY HEARS THE NEARER WATERS ROLL

IT HAD been as if they were shivering in the cleft of an iceberg. Ice varnished the clay-cemented logs that walled their narrow trench; when either man crouched a little lower into the freezing mud of the floor, a thin crust of ice crackled and rang under him; from the roof of the gulley which was a contracted strip of star-spattered sky, the planets that seemed close enough for picking hung like so many icicles. Every time Chrissly and the storekeeper from New Jersey stretched their stiffened arms, they touched something colder than even themselves; every time they raised their aching eyes, they saw ice or hoar-frost; a film of frost had formed on their ragged overcoats. The cold gradually ate inward; it left the surface of their bodies without sensation and settled, a dull pain in the bones of their skulls and in their innermost organs. They breathed lightly and with care, because to breathe was to suffer. For an hour there had been no sound save the occasional glassy tinkle of breaking ice: they might have been afloat alone on their berg in an arctic sea.

Between his chattering teeth, which clicked distinctly at the period, the man from New Jersey whispered: "There w-weren't any sh-shells in my trench when I was out here in N-November. I'd kind of l-like to know what it's l-l-like when a shell explodes in your t-t-trench." After five o'clock in the morning, one always whispers on the front line.

WHANG!

The night burst into flame about two hundred yards to their left. Then—darkness, blinding because there had been light.



"Well," chattered Chrissly, "y-you've c-come to a g-good p-p-place to f-f-find that out a'ready."

The man was close beside him, but only just discernible—only just discernible and scarcely to be recognized as an American soldier. In any conscript-camp, from the one at Ayr, Massachusetts, to that at Anniston, Alabama, the newest reserve-officer would have censured him. His uniform had suffered the sea-changes that every American uniform sooner or later suffered in France; on him, and on Chrissly also, the rakish service-hat had been replaced by a fore-and-aft cap pulled far over his ears; a muffler knitted in some warm American home swathed the head from brows to chin; crude shears had raggedly amputated the overcoat at the line of the knees; there was the sound of water sucking through the straw-wrapped boots, whenever either man wriggled his swollen toes to keep up the circulation of the blood.

"Th-that," continued Chrissly, evidently nodding toward the scene of the explosion, "must 'a' been one o' th-them there trench-mortars: *m-m-minenwerfers* they calls 'em. Some one s-says, daytimes you kin s-see 'em c-comin'."

"I know," said the man from New Jersey. "Ever w-watch a football-game? Those things look l-like a spiral k-kick-off—"

Another concussion put the period to his concluding sentence, a concussion different from its predecessor and followed by a sound for all the world like the first drops of a rainstorm on autumnal leaves. It was shrapnel, and this, as both occupants of the trench were aware, meant that the unseen enemy was finding a range for his larger guns.

"Now for the b-big show," said the man from New Jersey.

Chrissly, who had been thinking first of Léonie and then of the quiet little farmhouse at home in summertime, intended to make a polite reply. Perhaps he made it. He didn't know. Later he did not even remember the tremendous bang that must have succeeded when the star-spattered sky split open and came tumbling down upon his head. . . .

## II

Somebody wearing a just-visible brassard was bending over him.

" . . . he's all right. . . . It fell in the next trench. . . ."

"No, look here;"—it was another man with a brassard that now spoke—"shirt's sopping. He's got his."

Chrissly realized that it was of him they were talking. He caught shattered phrases about a broken left arm and an abdominal wound, a request for a first-aid pouch. As yet he felt no pain; he felt only very numb and very tired. He heard one of these newcomers say something about "nineteen years old" and the other add: "And fifty years' experience in the last few days." They seemed excessively busy with him, but one of them said that the man from New Jersey was dead. Then came the crisp order:

"Stretcher this way!"

Chrissly fainted.

## III

Out of the communication-trench, in the noise and flying lumps of frozen earth scattered by a fresh explosion, two more men trotted with a stretcher. On it they placed the inert thing that had been Chrissly and with it they staggered, stooping behind clay mounds, log-buttressed, slipping and stumbling through ice and mud, now and then another shell blazing and bellowing close at hand.

Of old, army medical-corps waited for the wounded to be brought to the rear; in modern warfare, those corps stretch one saving hand up to the first line. The injured man is taken direct to a regimental dressing-station; if his hurts demand it, he is carried thence to more elaborately equipped stations, and therefrom, when the need arises, to the farther field-hospitals, or "evacuation-hospitals," where delicate operations may be performed, and where, often, there are two thousand beds. Miles behind these, in the safety-zone, are the large base-hospitals at which "long cases" are cared for

until the patients are fit to be sent to seaside convalescents' camps. On such a progress Chrissly was now embarked.

## IV

The bearers stopped before a large dug-out where, carefully protected flash-lamp in hand, a regimental surgeon was rapidly inspecting several forms on so many stretchers.

"Quick, sir—please!" said one of Chrissly's bearers.

The surgeon never looked up from his rapid work.

"Quick, sir—please!" pleaded other bearers for other burdens.

"First come, first serve," said the surgeon.

Finally he reached the unconscious Chrissly. He injected a serum, applied a rough splint to the broken arm, applied a temporary dressing to the torn abdomen. He was deft and quick, but there were three new stretchers waiting before he had finished with Chrissly.

"Field-hospital," he decreed. "Get orders there."

Chrissly's bearers bore him away. . . .

## V

The field-hospital was like a circus-tent illuminated for a night-performance. There were rows of narrow tables bathed in light; on the tables lay wounded men, and along each row a surgeon walked with an orderly on one hand and a nurse on the other. At every table, the inspection-party would pause. There was the gleam of a knife, the ripping of cloth as the nurse cut shirt or drawers away from the wound; there was a brief direction from the surgeon. Then the orderly would tie a tag to the patient's blouse, and the party would move on.

Chrissly's eyes were open now.

"Pain?" asked the surgeon when he reached Chrissly.

Somehow—he neither nodded nor spoke—Chrissly signified assent.

The surgeon examined him, readjusted the splint and told the nurse to devise a new dressing.

"Can he stand a hypodermic?" asked the nurse.

The surgeon nodded.

The orderly—he was a third-year medical-student—produced the needle. The nurse bared Chrissly's right arm and bound it with a tight thong just above the elbow.

"Make a fist," said the surgeon.

Chrissly's eyes had become glassy. He had not yet uttered a sound. He uttered none now, but he clenched his right hand.

In the crook of the arm, the veins began to swell. The nurse wiped the skin above them with a bit of cotton soaked in iodine.

"Be careful not to go clear through the vein," the surgeon cautioned. "Now!"

The orderly nodded. He hooked the curved needle into the skin. The nurse loosened the thong. An index-finger slowly pushed the piston of the syringe—pushed until the well was empty.

"That doesn't hurt," said the surgeon: "you only think it does."

The nurse again applied the iodine.

Within five minutes, a sleeping Chrissly, tagged with the number of the base-hospital for which his baggage of flesh was destined, had been lifted into one of a row of waiting ambulances.

## VI

There were three bunks placed lengthwise in the ambulance, two swinging high along the sides and one down the center. The side ones had each its silent, motionless patient when Chrissly was carried there. A lantern, suspended from the roof, shed a faint light over chalky faces and bandaged heads strangely unhuman: already the bandages were stained with red. A flap of canvas and a high board separated the driver's seat from the interior. A private of the hospital-corps clambered in and took his post, in a crouching position, at the edge of the open rear, where he would be in readiness for rough-and-ready care of the inert passengers.

"Your first trip to-night?" asked the chauffeur.

The other man said that it was.

"Pretty busy out your way?"

"Pretty busy."

"I haven't had any sleep for forty-eight hours," said the chauffeur. The tired mask that was his face smiled a little: "but I'll be all right to-morrow night—they're going to allow me six hours in a real bed. So long: see you at the next rest-station."

He disappeared in the darkness. He cranked the motor. The ambulance snorted, shook, lurched forward.

They began their long drive.

## VII

For some time occasional shells burst in the ruined fields beside them, or howled like vaulting hyenas; once the dimmed headlight of the ambulance showed them, just in time, a vast crater, newly made, directly in their course. Then, gradually, the external noises ceased, and they were alone in the cruel cold and the tangible night with no other noises than the clatter of the motor, the flapping of the canvas and the relentless roar of the rushing wind.

The ambulance pitched like a narrow ship in a head-on sea; it rolled like a dory in the trough of the waves; its movements sickened. One of the wounded men vomited; the second babbled deliriously about a woman, grew violent, tore off his bandages: the orderly, dashed from side to side, cleaned up, did his best at replacing the disordered lint and linen. Chrissly remained silent. . . .

The orderly crouched at the rear and clung there. A puff of cold air extinguished the lantern. Groping to relight it, his fingers touched something wet and sticky: the face of the man that had been delirious, but now silent and still. By the first flicker of the relighted lamp, he saw that this man was dead.

Once there came a cold glow ahead. A benumbed driver, an orderly, two desperately wounded soldiers and one lifeless,

they drew up at a canteen, where Red Cross women served hot soup and coffee. Chrissly had not stirred. Then, whole, wounded and dead, the little party lumbered off again into the night.

They hurried. The cold became more intense. Cramped on the floor, the orderly looked out at the white road racing behind them; its bordering trees stretched appealing arms heavenward. Only after an interminable time did it seem to be growing clearer. They began to pass other ambulances, portable kitchens, supply-camions, going whence this ambulance had come.

At last, the winter sun rose. . . .

### VIII

It was two hours beyond the meridian when they passed a sentry and entered a large gateway.

"Say, is this a hotel?"

It was Chrissly's voice that was speaking. He must have been conscious for some time.

"No," said the orderly. "And you mustn't talk."

They didn't look unlike the grounds of a summer-resort hotel, the grounds of this hospital. Up on a hill stood a handsome old château with its gardens stretched, acre after acre, all around it. But a close glance showed that the war had converted it to a more useful purpose. Fifty new buildings had sprung up around the old ones, and buildings still newer—enough for a thousand more beds—were in process of construction just beyond the farthest wall.

Other orderlies carried Chrissly into a receiving-ward. For the past week he had lived with rats and death in mud and filth; he was half-frozen, he was caked with dirt, he was crawling with a dozen different kinds of vermin: nurses in crisp white uniforms took away his clothes for fumigation; he was carried to the bathroom next door and shaved and washed—in the luxury of warm water. Then they wheeled him into a third apartment for diagnosis. . . .

An important surgeon was complaining:

"What—another? This isn't right: the number of patients is changing all the time. Here it's jumped from four hundred to seven hundred in two days without warning. And you can't count on orders. I get word to be ready for one hundred and sixty, and along come ambulances with two hundred and one."

Still grumbling, the overworked man looked at Chrissly and ordered an immediate operation: "Too weak for chloroform. Nitrous oxide."

## IX

Chrissly lay on the operating table—a clean Chrissly, very white and with that refinement of face which loss of blood almost invariably produces. The nurses were grouped around him, surgeons and assistants already at work with the fluoroscope.

Above the lad's upturned feet and about a yard away stood an X-ray apparatus. Its flesh-piercing light fell on a disk of metal that an orderly held over his bared waist. The violet rays passed through the disk and into the patient's abdominal cavity: the surgeon's eyes followed them through the metal and into the flesh, his knife-plying fingers worked under the disk and deep in the wounded man's belly. He cut with that solid plate for a window: he could see what he sought before he set out for it, and, if he overlooked any shell fragments, there was a magnetic contrivance that sounded a buzzer when he got near them. . . .

## X

It would be all right, they said to one another. The broken arm, of course, was nothing; nor the superficial wounds on it; as for the abdominal wound, the operation had been successful, and the patient had survived the shock. A stay here under treatment, then a vacation at one of the convalescents' camps by the seaside, perhaps a furlough home, and he might even be well enough to fight again—by March or April.

So they clothed Chrissly in the cotton-wool pajama-suit that is the military-hospital uniform. They took him to

the surgical ward and put him to bed among a row of other wounded. Outside, on a special shelf bearing his hospital-number, had been placed his "Patient's Equipment": bed-linen, socks, bathrobe and towels. Now beside his cot was hung a Red Cross "Comfort Bag."

He opened his eyes upon the pretty nurse that was tucking the covers about him. He was still uncertain as to his whereabouts, and something that had happened in the trenches—to himself, to his captain or to the man from New Jersey; he could not make out which—had wiped every word of French from his memory.

"Oh, miss," he asked the nurse, in the heavy accent of his childhood, "kin you speak English still?"

She smiled. "Of course. I'm an American."

"Are you an American, miss?"

She nodded.

"Well," whispered Chrissly, "then might I ask you something, like one American to anuzzer?"

The nurse bent her head. "Yes. What is it?"

He fixed his weary glance on her face. His thin white face worked for a moment. "Ain't this climate hell a'ready?" was what he asked her.

She didn't laugh. She said it was indeed hell. Then she attempted to turn to the man in the next cot: one of the last week's patients with a shell-scooped thigh.

"An' just one sing more, miss," insisted Chrissly, a helpless hand fluttering to detain her. "They say this here place ain't a hotel?"

"No, no," the nurse answered. "It's not a hotel, but you really mustn't talk any more."

Chrissly was very weak, but very persistent. He turned his eyes, since he could not turn his head, to his neighbor.

"Well, mister, if it ain't a hotel, is it one o' them there org'dressin'-places?"

The man in the next bed comforted him:

"Naw, this here ain't one o' them way-stations on the road-back. Not much. This is a base-hospital, this is. You can go to sleep safe, sonny; you're home at last."



## CHAPTER XIII

A SHORT ONE, SHOWING, HOWEVER, THAT FRANCE IS NOT THE ONLY PLACE WHERE FATE GATHERS THREADS FOR HER INTRICATE WEB

IT WAS hard for even the Tollens pride to keep the tears from overflowing Sarah Brown's eyes when she left the Tidd house under the lash of Mrs. Ralph's misunderstanding insults, and there was a traitorous moisture in the glance that, a few minutes later, encountered Miss Hattie Lloyd's on Elm Avenue, which Miss Hattie was quick to perceive. The town-gossip gave herself a hug of anticipation. She planted herself directly in the other's way.

"Why, Sarah," she said, "aren't you feeling well?"

Sarah replied that she was never better.

"You look run down or worried"—perhaps it was Andy!—

"What do you hear from Andy?" Miss Hattie inquired.

"He's well."

"You hear right often, don't you?"

"He writes twice a week."

"And he's getting along all right?"

"Very well indeed."

Miss Hattie cocked her head: "I don't see anything with his name to it in the newspapers."

"He doesn't put his name to what he writes, Miss Hattie, and he doesn't write for any of the Philadelphia papers."

"Oh, *doesn't* he? Have you joined the Red Cross?"

Sarah shook her head.

"I thought I saw you coming out of the Tidd house just now."

It struck Sarah that perhaps Miss Hattie, who knew everything about Americus and remembered most, might throw some light on Mrs. Ralph's astounding assertions.

"I was just in there looking for Mr. Bolingbroke. I—. By the way, Miss Hattie, did my father ever live there?"

Had she intended it as such, Sarah could have devised no better diversion. An appeal to the past was the one means of distracting Miss Hattie's attention from the present.

"That house?" She cocked her head again and munched the quid of recollection. "Hum. Why, let's see. Hum." She had forgotten, and she always felt forgetfulness to be shameful. "He surely did live somewhere near here, for a while, right after he was married. Of course, your people's, your grandfather's, was the old place on Hickory Street: 'Mount Horeb' they used to call it, though I could never see why—you were born there."

"I know that," said Sarah. "I was just wondering, somehow, whether we ever lived in this one." She made a quick circuit of her interlocutor. "It doesn't matter," she added, and meant it. "I was only wondering." She made off, down Elm Avenue.

If she had not said that it didn't matter, Miss Hattie might have thought no more about it, but Miss Hattie's rule of judgment was that nobody ever told the truth. There she stood looking after Sarah with speculation in her birdlike eyes.

"I wonder what's back of all this?" she pondered.

## II

Blunston had got and, after some debate, published, as Garcia noted, Andy's ridicule of the censorship; got also some of Andy's warnings, and shared, in consequence, his fears—when the longer memorandum came safely through, Blunston replied:

"This is war, and because all wars are bad, even the best of wars must have its errors. Nevertheless, there is a limit beyond which errors are inexcusable. Use your judgment, do your duty and fear nobody."

Then, deep in the winter, came some work from Andy so well written that Blunston's conscience would no longer rest. He signed to it Andy's own name. He confessed to his papers,

and his papers not only printed the articles under the new signature, but wrote him that they would continue the service.

The *Spy* reprinted the first of the signed articles and headed it "Honor to a Son of Americus." The next day, Mrs. Bolingbroke stepped out of her limousine before Sarah Brown's house and rang the bell.

Sarah had been in the kitchen. She opened the door with one hand and untied her apron with the other.

Mrs. Ralph nodded. "Hello, Sarah," she said. She spoke as if their last meeting had never occurred. "That's fine work Andy's doing in France."

If her involuntary hostess was surprised, she gave no sign of it. If she saw the expectation that she would admit her caller, she gave no sign of that. She stood there, a tall drab figure, her apron in her kitchen-damp hands, and yet a figure newly dignified.

"Thank you," she said.

Mrs. Ralph wondered whether she ought to feel nettled. "We think you ought to be doing as much here as your son is over there," she said. "We think you ought to come into the Red Cross."

Sarah said: "Thank you."

It was inconceivable! "We'd be glad to have you," said Mrs. Ralph.

"Thank you," said Sarah.

Mrs. Ralph's temper was never long. She first fell back a step in amazement and then came forward a step in rising anger.

"Do you mean you'll come, or do you mean you won't?"

Sarah stood firm. Her voice did not rise and did not falter.

"I mean I'll do what work I can outside and send it in, but I won't join. And I mean I'm much obliged to you."

She began to readjust her apron. It was a token of dismissal that Mrs. Ralph, for the first time in a long while at a loss for words, accepted in silence.

## III

That was the day when, while 'Andy's credit in the town temporarily remounted, the parents of Harry Kurtz, the lad who had hated to leave his terrier Fan behind, learned that he was in France. They learned it by a telegram from Washington:

"Deeply regret to inform you Private Henry C. Kurtz, G Company —th Machine-Gun Battalion, reported seriously wounded in action, January 30th."

It was the first message of the kind to come to the little town. It was the forerunner of many that soon were changing service-stars to gold.

Sarah went to Mrs. Kurtz, and Mrs. Kurtz wept brokenly on Sarah's thin shoulder.

"If he only could 'a' gone for a correspondent like your 'Andy," sobbed Mrs. Kurtz, "our Harry'd 'a' been safe now!"

## IV

Miss Hattie was just then calling on Blunston's cousins—black-haired Cousin Flora, red-haired Cousin Mollie and red-haired Cousin Becky—and Andrew Blunston was there. Lawyer Dickey had happened in, and the girls' father beckoned him and Andrew Blunston out of the great hall and into the dining-room, with some smiling excuse about "estate business" that did not at all deceive Miss Hattie, whose pricked ears presently caught the tinkle of glass. When the three men reappeared, she cocked her head at the youngest.

"Andrew," she said, "your namesake's doing well these days, isn't he?"

Blunston was lighting a cigarette. He looked at its end as he answered:

"Yes. It's very gratifying when you come to think. . . ."

Had he intended to finish, he never would have done so, for Miss Hattie, embracing herself and responding to the caress with a coquettish leer, turned on Mr. Dickey.

"Jim, I guess that old Tidd house Ralph Bolingbroke lent his wife's Red Cross must be worth quite a little money."

Lawyer Dickey had known Miss Hattie all his life and so knew the impossibility of knowing her goal before her arrival. Nevertheless, he suspected here some belittling of Ralph's generosity, and, though he disliked the Bolingbrokes even more than he disliked Hattie Lloyd, he decided to defend the absent enemy for the sake of frustrating the enemy present:

"Just after Ralph turned it over, there was a fellow came to town from a five-and-ten-cent store syndicate and offered him ten thousand for it, and Ralph said he wouldn't sell so long's it could be useful to the Red Cross."

"Hum," said Miss Hattie. "Ralph told you so himself, I suppose?"

The girls laughed.

"Of course he did," said red-haired Cousin Becky; "Ralph never hides his light under a bushel."

"I know that," Mr. Dickey admitted, "but it was the truth. The stores' agent retained me to keep an eye on it for him."

"Well, if he's going to get the money sooner or later anyhow, all Ralph loses is the interest," said Miss Hattie. The reflection was worth another hug. "What makes me think of it: Sarah Brown did a queer thing a while ago; she asked me if her father'd ever lived in that house."

"And you couldn't remember?" asked black-haired Cousin Flora.

"Well, no," said Miss Hattie shamefacedly, "I couldn't."

"Why, Miss Hattie"—it was red-haired Cousin Mollie this time—"I thought you never forgot anything!"

"Don't, generally."

The girls' father had to rescue their guest. "Joe Tolens?" said he. "Seems to me he did live there, right after he was married, for a couple of years, till his father died. How about that, Jim?"

Mr. Dickey was uncertain. Wasn't it old Doctor Ireland—or the Kents? He rather thought it was the Kents. Doctor Ireland's brother John built it, somewhere in the 'forties, but

he didn't live there very many years, and there was surely a better sort of owner than the Tidds before it fell to their level.

"It *was* Joe Tollens," said old Mr. Blunston. "I remember now. I remember one evening he had a party there, and somebody made a punch out of Jamaica rum from Philadelphia. Who was that, now?"

"Joe Tollens himself," said the girls' mother. "I remember the time you mean."

"But how did Ralph Bolingbroke get it?" Miss Hattie demanded.

"I don't recollect." Mr. Dickey was tiring of the subject: he differed from most people of his age by a lack of interest in things gone by. "It hasn't come to the point of looking up the deeds—and won't while this war lasts. It was his father that bought it, but I don't think he paid cash, for nobody ever heard of the Tidds getting ready money from anybody; their only legal tender was promissory notes, and *they* generally went to protest." Mr. Dickey had several of them in his office-safe to that day, but he did not say so.

"Hum," said Miss Hattie. She was hugging herself warm preparatory to departure. "It might be worth looking up, mightn't it?"

## CHAPTER XIV

SHOWING, AMONG DIVERSE STARTLING MATTERS OF IMPORT TO ANDREW BLUNSTON, ONE THAT SHOULD LONG BE OF IMPORT TO ALL HIS FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN: TO WIT, THE EARLY AMERICAN FRONT

FORTY-EIGHT mute hours followed Innis's threats to the press-division. Andy and Evans took the precaution of making numerous copies of their suspended stories, of which they had carbons, and of dropping these in out-of-the-way post-boxes about the city, with the hope that at least one copy would be overlooked by the censorship, going over them with the utmost care first to see that they in no way could give military information to the enemy; Innis, whose material was to be sent, if ever, by cable, sat in the Napolitain and consumed his heart, together with an occasional *export curacao*. What went on behind the reticent curtain of the Intelligence Department, they could only guess: they imagined telephone-conversations between the rue Ste. Anne and Chaumont, underseas messages to Washington.

Further word of the wounded Chrissly, Andy, try as he did, could not secure. He endeavored to go about his work as usual, wrote some unobjectionable matter, which, evading Garcia, he turned in after the old fashion, and he sent off to his mother a letter that he was at pains to make sanguine. He especially noted a queer little man with a cap down over his eyes and a scornful mouth, who sat on a doorstep across the rue de Valois—Andy saw him at each coming-out and going-in—and who seemed uncompromisingly antagonistic to the American uniform.

Two days passed thus. Then the Paris edition of the New York *Herald* and, presently, the newspapers at home, published this:

"American officers have been authorized to state that the sector of the Western Front taken over by the United States Army is in Lorraine, to the northwest of Toul."

Officially, that was all.

"And they call it a communiqué!" Evans snorted.

"You'll notice it is so worded as to let the American people think we've been there since November," said Innis.

"Anyhow," said Andy, "you've forced them to release our stories."

## II

On his way from Evans and Innis at the Napolitain to his Palais Royal garret, Andy, for a moment, could have sworn that one of the two figures walking a hundred yards ahead of him was Sylvia. Only the absence of Tac at first made him uncertain; then he dismissed the surmise as unworthy when he noticed, from a turn of his body, that the man was Louis Garcia. He felt his face flush as he saw Garcia, rather too solicitously insist on helping his companion into a taxi-cab.

His mind was all on the communiqué, but had he been able to catch a glimpse into that cab and listen to the conversation that followed, he would have had strange and new misgivings. For this was what he would have heard:

"Of course I'm going to see you to your hotel. Think of me meeting you here in Paris!"

"It was nice of you to hurry the pass: I'd have had to wait hours."

"You can do something in return if you will."

The young woman studied Garcia's face. He took her steady look for acquiescence.

"You're a clever girl—as well as a pretty one, Miss Raeburn." Garcia paused. Finally he said: "You must be meeting a good many of these war-correspondents we have to put up with."

"Is *that* the way you feel about them?" she laughed.

"If you only knew what lengths they go to, every one of them, to get around our regulations! They look like a bunch



of enlisted men, I know, but the way they behave, and talk, you'd think they were all field-m Marshals."

"I've met only one or two of them."

"You know young Brown: A. McK. Brown. I saw you talking to him one day, only I wasn't quite sure it was you till I saw your name registered on our list.—I *can* trust you, can't I?"

"I've always been considered trustworthy, Mr. Garcia."

"I'll make it worth your while. And just between ourselves, Brown's a trouble-maker. I'll be glad if—well, if you'd keep an eye on him—and any of the other correspondents, too, for that matter—and report to me once in a while as to what they're up to." Her clear gaze made him add: "You'd be doing a real service to your country, you know."

As he helped her out of the cab, he said:

"How about taking dinner with me sometime soon?"

"I'm awfully busy—"

"Here, too. Still, how about next Wednesday night, just a nice quiet dinner at Paillard's?"

"It sounds lovely—but I daren't accept. I'm going on tour any day now. Thank you ever so much just the same."

"Well, some night—soon."

"Perhaps." She seemed in a hurry to be gone: "I left my dog with the concierge, and I think he hears me."

"I don't see why all actresses have to have dogs," Garcia complained; but he added: "Don't forget you're in my employment now."

"Oh, I'll come and report," she laughed, as she ran up the steps.

"About that dinner?"

"I'll let you know sometime if I'm free!"

"That's a promise," he called, as he closed the door of the cab.

### III

The Americans were "in"; but were they there in strength enough to matter? On the afternoon of the day on which the evasive communiqué appeared, Andy heard news that

compelled him to doubt. Evans took him to a government office and introduced him to a grave French official. This was a personage that spoke with authority not a little enhanced, in Andy's eyes, by the ribbon of the Legion of Honor and a vast black beard out of which came a statement precise and prepared:

"You must tell your people to be quick. We must have more men. There is no more time to be spared. We are in possession of important information: somewhat delayed by the breaks in the Russian negotiations, but now hurried by the internal unrest in Austria, which has informed Berlin that it can not fight a year longer, the great offensive of the Central Empires will surely be launched before the end of March. We shall be attacked at three points: two on the French and one on the British front. Paris and the channel-ports and a rupture of the liaison between the French and British lines will be the objectives. I tell you in confidence, gentlemen, that unless we have reenforcements for a counter-offensive, the war will be lost."

"If we say that in our papers—" began Andy.

"You must not put the words in my mouth."

"But if we can say it—"

"If you can do anything to make your country hurry troops here—if you can do anything to end the delays, you may save us. If not—" He flung his arms wide and concluded the interview.

#### IV

Sylvia, when Andy at last permitted himself to see her, was a sober nun in a Y. M. C. A. uniform. He called of an evening at her hotel, and she met him in a gray-blue skirt and a dark green cape and a hat of gray-blue with the inverted triangle of her order upon it. Only rebellious tendrils of her hair, escaped and shining against the hat-brim, denied her severity.

"How did it go? Of course it was a success and of course you weren't afraid of your audiences and of course

they thought you were just great." Andy was sure of all that. "Gee, but I wish I could have seen you there!"

The tour had been fortunate and another was soon to follow, but Sylvia was in serious mood. Her eyes were not only beautiful: they had been made to use, and she had used them. She was enthusiastic when she spoke of the enlisted men in the camp; she made no mention of Garcia, or of her encounter with him; but when she spoke of the tardiness of the officials in charge of the American effort, she despaired.

"We've only a handful," she said. "Nobody at home could imagine how dreadful it is. And I was at Brest—oh, our navy is wonderful: they're doing wonders, and the French love them—but what sort of troops do you suppose are coming over in the transports? Whole companies of lens-grinders and laundrymen. In the hotel I heard an American captain talking to a French colonel: the captain said he ran a laundry in New York and was sent to run one here."

She was never more lovely than when in distress. The slightly drawn-together brows were dark against her white skin; a pulse beat in her temples; her red mouth drooped a little and her gaze was sorrowful. He felt that this hotel-parlor was henceforth to be a holy place.

"I've written the truth," he said.

He told her what had happened, she listening with hands clasped, her supple body bent toward him beside her. When he had finished:

"Don't mind about their rules," she said, with splendid feminine scorn of legal prohibitions: "Get all that home."

"It's gone," said Andy. He was looking between her eyes. Without knowing that they said it, his fascinated lips added: "You're the most wonderful girl in all the world."

She drew back; she was more serious than ever now. "Don't call me that. I'm not at all wonderful, and as for being young, if I wasn't old enough before, this war is making an old woman of me." Then she gave him one of her sudden smiles that were always like sunshine after rain. "Would you like to go to the British front?" she asked.

Would he like it! Andy's freckles were drowned in a crimsoned delight: "Gee, can you fix it for me?"

She could; she had. She had met, it appeared, a former stage-friend, English-born and now turned Waac, who had an uncle on one of the British staffs, and this uncle had arranged everything. Andy was to go in a fortnight. He was to go to the British Embassy and sign a lot of papers.

He fell into raptures of expectation and talked until all hours. He left his goddess more her worshipper than ever and more than ever resolved to pursue his thorny bypath of duty to America all the way to the general goal. He came out of the hotel with his head so far among the stars that he nearly fell over some earth-crawling creature who looked as if he might be the sneering observer of the rue de Valois.

## V

Evans had suggested that Andy might find trace of his wounded friend through the American Red Cross, which was establishing a bureau for just such inquiries, and the lad was about to go to the headquarters in the Place de la Concorde next morning when he was further urged there by a letter from America. It had come all the long road from Pennsylvania and lay at last upon his crowded desk in Paris—a few laborious lines in pencil upon a single sheet of blue-ruled pulp paper, torn from a note-pad. It was a timid little letter, hesitant, imperfectly articulate. Andy could not look at it without wondering how it had ever braved the journey and how it had ever survived:

"Dear Sir," it ran, "I take up my pen in good health hoping it finds you the same to ast a favor because you remember our Harry. He was in C. Co., —th inft. when he enlisted and wrote often at first from camp but maybe he's in France now anyhow he doesn't any more. He was always a good boy and wrote regular, Mr. Brown, and we are worried and can't find out. Will kindly ast you can you do anything to find out which

we will be very grateful for. You know his name is Henry C. and then the same as mine. He was always a good boy.

"Yours truly,

"MRS. KURTZ.

"P. S.—Have just got word wounded but not how bad. Please Mr. Brown do something."

Andy had to blink a little as he read it. He seemed to see the old familiar town again, one street lined by pleasant two-story frame houses, and in one of them, exactly like the others, a tiny parlor: the bunch of immortelles under glass on the mantelpiece, the crayon-portraits on the wall, the marble-top center-table bearing a tremendous gilt-edged family-Bible interleaved with pages headed "Marriages," "Births" — "Deaths." And he saw a woman at the table, a woman in appearance not unlike his own mother; there was more gray in her hair; her face was angular. Because her hands were stiffened by hard work, this woman held the pencil awkwardly. . . .

## VI

"Well," said a man at a desk in the Red Cross offices—a man with a round face and eyes at once businesslike and kindly—"about Privates Henry C. Kurtz and Christian Shuman. This woman may have written before the War Department could get details, or the boy may have been sent to a French hospital and lost track of."

To Andy it seemed incredible that this could happen to a soldier bearing an identity-disk; but it appeared that the suggested event was not uncommon. No army kept a perfect record. Reports followed a man until he was registered as "Sent to Base-Hospital," and then they stopped. Which of the many base-hospitals he was directed toward it was the hospital's business to tell, and there were often rushes of wounded so great that record-taking became impossible.

The man at the desk went to work. He gave orders: a clerk was telephoning to the army's statistical division; a goggled stenographer was sending a telegram of inquiry to

the chaplain of Harry's regiment; a second stenographer was wiring every army divisional Red Cross agent and every Red Cross hospital-searcher in France.

"How long will it take?" asked Andy.

"Ten minutes or two days," said the man at the desk.

Andy hoped that it would take only ten minutes. He thought about Harry's mother: she had already waited long. He thought of Chrissy. . . .

"Of course," said his informant, "if we don't get an immediate reply, we wait, and then, after six months, why, the soldier will be reported as—"

Andy did not want to hear the end of that sentence. He tried to think of something else. Presently:

" . . . till the government can permanently mark them, the job's ours. We're having designs made for a temporary metal-marker that can later be removed and sent to the soldier's family."

What was this? Something in his tone had recaptured attention.

"Mark?" Andy repeated. "Mark what?"

"Their graves: the graves of American soldiers that die in France. You see, they often have to be buried where they fall, and the place might be forgotten, so we mark it and send the family a photograph of the grave."

Andy recalled something that he had seen, but, in the manifold horrors of the time, scarcely noticed, during his latter visit to the front: it was a military-cemetery close to the front line; the shells were falling there; there French and American soldiers had been buried side by side—and, as he stood in the gateway, he saw bodies dug out and tossed aside by explosions. The big shells were grave-robbers. . . .

The telephone rang. Andy's cicerone looked up from the receiver.

"Here's luck," he said. "Both of 'em found. It took us just"—he consulted his wrist-watch—"just forty minutes. Pretty good work, eh?"

"Where is he?" demanded Andy. He thrust into his breast pocket the letter from Harry's mother.

"Both at base-hospital No. —, French," answered the man at the desk. "That's only an hour's ride out of Paris. Take the first one of our cars that's at the door. The driver will know the roads. Phone us if we can do anything. Good-by."

## VII

Andy sat beside the chauffeur. The Champs Elysées was only a blur of bare trees and white-streamered *nourrices* as the car scorched along it. They leaped the Rond-Point to the Porte Maillot. They crossed the curving Seine at the Ile du Pont.

That chauffeur also knew something about the work in hand:

". . . women go every day . . . see the man's taken care of . . . write letters right there, beside his bed—letters to his folks back home, you know."

The car careened around a sharp road-turning.

". . . stay till the man's dead," the chauffeur remorselessly pursued—"or till he gets well . . . writes a mother what her son's last words were . . . look up his pals . . . get their stories about him . . ."

The rush of the wind would jerk the words from his mouth and fling them a hundred yards behind. The letter burned in Andy's pocket, against his heart.

The suburbs had given place to villages. Now there followed flashing stretches of open road. And at last the car slowed down. It was only an hour's ride—for an express-train.

"The soldier Kurtz is here. He was shot through the lungs in a trench-raid. He is strong, and we have added to his strength the best that we could; but now—Monsieur is only just in time," said the nurse.

## VIII

One of the beds was shut from its neighbors by a pair of screens. Another nurse was there, and a doctor, and from something on the bed a whisper came:

"You're the American, ain't you?"

Andy thought he said "yes." He knew that the word caught in his throat.

"An' you've come all the way from Paris?"

Andy answered:

"I've come all the way from home."

The doctor caught his eye. His silent lips formed one word:

"*Vite!*"

Andy bent over the bed. It was Harry Kurtz who lay there: a boy that had been boy with him. Andy remembered their days at school, their days of truantage. They had gone swimming together. There was one winter night of hare-and-hounds. . . . He had never seen a finer face or braver than this. And never a calmer.

"Gee, if it ain't Andy Brown!"

The eyes were big with gratitude.

"It's me, all right," said Andy.

Harry lay very still. The fingers of one hand plucked at the army-blanket that covered the bed.

"I never guessed it'd be you. I ain't seen you since—I ain't seen you for a long time."

Andy swallowed a lump in his throat. "I wish I'd looked you up before," he said.

"That's all right." The pale lips made the words slowly. "D'you remember my dawg, Fan, Andy? She's dead. Andy"—The wide calm eyes sought his.—"I'm goin' after her."

Andy's answer was only to produce that letter. Somehow he managed to read to the lad what the lad's mother had written. Dying, Harry gave him the strength to read it without faltering.

When that was over, Harry spoke again; already his voice was perceptibly weaker.

"Thanks," he said. "You'll give her my love—her and pop?"

"I'll cable it."

"An' you'll explain why it was I didn't—write? You see, I always wrote reg'lar, an' I wouldn't want her—to think—"



"She'll know to-night, Harry."

His features relaxed. He smiled.

"Thanks," said Private Harry Kurtz. "So long."

## IX

The Red Cross would take charge of the burial, and Andy would be there. He caught the nurse's hand.

"Shuman," he said: "it's not the same with him, is it?"

"The same? I do not understand." The nurse indicated a near-by door. "He is in that ward."

Andy brushed her aside and darted forward. He was through the doorway; he was in another ward, and there, propped on the first cot, a gaunt Chrissly was vacantly regarding him.

"Say, you're an American, ain't?" asked Chrissly. "Well, kin you speak French? If you kin, I wisht you'd let these folks know I want a pen an' paper still. I been tryin' t' git some fer more'n a week yet. I want to write my pop while I'm a wounded hero, an' I gotta hurry, fer they're goin' to make me git up to-morry a'ready, an' then I'll want to git back an' fight." . . .

## X

From his first sleep in that American hospital to which he had been taken, Chrissly had wakened with the sense that some great change was come over the world. At first he thought it was the pain from which he suffered, the warmth of the bed, the quiet of the vast room in which he lay—a quiet wholly different from that in his trench preceding the barrage. Then he found himself repeating:

*"Wie oft, wann ich in Druwel bin,  
Denk ich an selli Ruh,  
Un wott, wann's nor Gott's Wille war,  
Ich ging ihr schneller zu—  
Doch wart ich bis mei Schtindle schlagt,  
Nor'd sag ich—Welt, adju!"*

It had something to do with that, the change; in some wonderful way, he was nearer home.

He remembered that he was a soldier, but he remembered nothing of France except the trench. He had been in the trench, and it was cold. There was somebody with him. . . . And now he was not in the trench. . . .

Thinking made him dizzy. . . .

He lay very still. . . .

## XI

What mistake of orders moved him, he was never to learn. Some confusion there must have been, for there was much confusion in those days—some mistaken shuffling of the cards that were men in the great game that was war. When Chrissly returned again to consciousness, he was not where he had been: one of a procession, he was being carried out of a railway train and toward a long white building, and his bearers wore blue-gray uniforms.

He was taken into a room already crowded with cots. Here and there, soldiers were laying straw on the floor, and on that straw other soldiers were laying wounded men. Sudden movements brought forth sharp cries of pain; something was breathing stertorously, with a nerve-tearing sound; a horrible odor of putrifying wounds sickened him.

There came a doctor, who looked him over, and asked questions out of a jungle of whiskers. Chrissly could not understand a word.

## XII

"We was doin' a little patrollin'. They was three of us. We was crawlin' on our bellies, tryin' to spot a listenin'-post. They spotted us 'fore we spotted them. That's how I got mine. The other two was killed."

It was a man in the next cot that was talking. He was talking to somebody on the other side of him. Chrissly asked: "What fer place is this?"

His neighbor answered without moving: "It's a French hospital."

"French?"

"Yep."

"You're American, ain't?"

"Betcher life."

Chrissly thought it over. "Then why are we in a French hospital a'ready? Last thing I knew, we was in an American hospital!"

A voice from beyond, the voice of the "other fellow," answered. "You can search us," it said.

It was here that Andy found him.

### XIII

He had forgotten Léonie, but he was vividly conscious of Minnie Taylor. No effort of Andy's availed to restore the broken piece of memory, and the attending doctor advised against further endeavor.

"You got me mixed wis somebody else, Brown," said Chrissly, and, when Andy would have insisted: "What we know not burns us not." His former accent had returned. He wrote a fervent letter to Minnie and to his home a letter blurred with homesickness.

When, in the late afternoon, Andy returned from Harry Kurtz's hurried funeral—a funeral with a French chaplain officiating and a squad of invalided French soldiers, in their bright blue hospital uniforms, in attendance—Chrissly had been officially located by his own army. An officer was there and had made the Amish man happy with the suggestion that he would perhaps be given leave and sent to America to make speeches for a Liberty Loan campaign.

### XIV

On his part, Andy had time on his hands before the date set for his trip to the British front, and was resolved to visit the Toul sector again. He wrote to Harry Kurtz's mother, said good-by to Sylvia and then, it being impossible to secure a pass, started away without one.

He amazingly did not need it. So far as his experience went, nobody needed credentials to reach the American front. He went, by way of Nancy, to Toul. It was midnight when his train reached that city, then a bare twelve miles behind the lines. At the station nobody asked to see his pass, nobody asked even for his railway-ticket; to the sentries at the city gates he gave no more than a shouted "Good night," and, at the hotel to which he groped his way through a darkened town, he was not required to make so much as the formal registration that, throughout the rest of France was, even in times of peace, exacted for the information of the police.

Nevertheless, after she had led him through a room in which a couple of officers were drinking Niersteiner, the red-cheeked chambermaid babbled, as she showed him to his room, of massacre.

"Monsieur will do well," she said, "to sleep with some clothes near him—warm clothes—for the dirty Boche planes come frequently, and then it is necessary to descend into the cellars. Oh, but we have beautiful cellars under this hotel, but a little damp. The sirens call so soon as the enemy *avions* cross the lines: then monsieur will do well to clothe himself. When the *avions* approach the town, the tocsin sounds, and then you will at once descend. Take the rail well in the hand, for the stone stairs, monsieur sees, are well worn." . . .

It seemed to Andy that he did hear sirens that night, but he was too tired to get up and make certain, and the last sound that he could surely identify was only a bang of artillery muffled by comfortable distance.

## XV

An overcast morning found the city undisturbed; it took him to the beautiful cathedral where the relics of Toul's first bishop are enshrined and where the devout have for long years implored that saint's good offices to keep their countryside "safe from the devastations of war," the cathedral whereat the Maid of Orleans was received into the faith that was one

day to canonize her. Andy bowed his head before her statue and fancied that the armored figure resembled the figure of some one he knew, perhaps a little because he wanted it to resemble her. It was on coming from the cathedral that he encountered a Y. M. C. A. camion and hailed it. The driver was taking supplies to huts behind the front line; that done, he was to carry tobacco and chewing-gum in a pack on his back into the trenches. In return for help, he would give Andy a lift, and the help Andy cheerfully guaranteed.

The course lay along what were, at first, excellent highroads and through the now familiar, widely-rolling country so formed that a village nestling on the shoulder of a hill commanded large miles of territory. The new roads, the military short-cuts hewn with a Roman sense of time-salvage tempered only by the modern soldiers' appreciation of strategical values and twentieth-century gunfire, were of almost equal quality. As apparently no ingenuity of mortal man could stop them from being, were the lanes and bypaths, now ankle-deep in slime and again knee-deep with sucking ooze. Behind the American front, as in the American camp, the heaviest curse of the soldiers was the mud—mud that took of every step the toll of energy paid but by the score on dry ground, gray mud that crept into the boot and up the leg, mud that entered the food one ate and caked in the blankets when one rolled into them at night.

"We're getting pretty close to things now," said the "Y" man—he was a grizzled chap with a cheerful word for every soldier they passed; he had been, he explained, a paint-salesman in Denver. "Guns are getting kind of loud."

They were. In a clump of woods a few hundred yards away, which Andy remembered from his previous visit, German shells were falling. They burst with a tremendous clatter and sent into the rain-soaked air roots of trees, and branches, and bits of rock. Yet just here, by the roadside, was a "Y" hut—and a woman in it.

She was short and practical and American. She had pieces of court-plaster on her face—useful, not ornamental—and her sleeves were rolled high, and she was washing dishes for

her "boys." She had always been with this division; she had "trailed along after it" from the port at which it landed.

"Hard work?" she said. "Of course, but then just think how much harder work these men are doing."

She jerked her tousled head toward the muddy soldiers that thronged about her. They called her affectionately by her Christian name, with the "Miss" before it that is a concession to convention, and she sold them cigarettes and chocolate and served them tea and sewed on buttons by the very gross.

"And I've got a daisy room to sleep in," she told him. "It's over there in the village. A big double bed. When I get home, nights, the French woman whose house it's in, always has a fire going for me, with my nightgown warming before it, and something hot to eat. I'm almost as well off as I used to be in Passaic, New Jersey."

"She's got it," said the grizzled "Y" man as he cranked his motor—"what you've got to have to make good in this work over here: the spirit of Jesus Christ. You've got to think of just helping, helping, helping—and of nothing else. And that's the sort she is."

They plunged into the soggy woods. The ground was one tremendous sponge gorged with water. A wide American railway ran up to the outlying trees, where it met the narrow-gauge relic of the French occupation; thence, through all the hours that precede the dawn, long trains of ammunition-wagons daily crawled. The road, now empty save for Andy's camion, twisted agonizedly among the thick timber and breathless underbrush. Shells fell every little while; in a gully lay a body, its arms extended. Andy thought that nothing could live here, and yet, at a quick turn, they found an entire artillery-camp and a band that played *Over There*, to which hundreds of soldiers sang the chorus.

The afternoon had darkened when the lightened camion again struck into the open country, but a sign warned them "Lamps out beyond this point." It was in deepening twilight that they visited an immense château of the fourteenth cen-

tury, still full of old furniture, but housing several hundred American men.

"Ain't it a grand old place?" one of them appealed to Andy. "An' they's a kind of attic, way up-stairs, that's all sealed up, an' they's vaults an' vaults in the big cellars sealed up, too, an' the fellows say they're full o' pictures, oil paint-in's and things, what the old masters done."

A more cynical soldier, who was standing near by, sniffed.

"Old masters?" said he. "More like it's old brandy. French cog-nac brandy, that's what it is." . . .

There was night on the road. How Andy's driver knew the way without lights was a riddle; for Andy it was just possible to make out that the buildings which here and there lined it were not, properly speaking, buildings at all; were only gaping ruins raked and reraked by a three years' bombardment.

In one such group of ruins the camion drew up before a house in which a single room remained habitable. An old mother and her daughter lived there, all that was left of a formerly prosperous family of farmers. The farm was now in No Man's Land; the father, two sons and a younger daughter had been killed by German shells and were buried in the village churchyard under the crumbling church-tower; two other sons had fallen in the French ranks; the young woman's fiancé was blown to bits in the first attack on Verdun, thirty miles away; yet, when the government ordered the civilian population of the hamlet to withdraw, these two begged to be allowed to stay—they feared the outside world more than the Boche shells—and somehow their prayers were granted. Among our soldiers, they were of all the French alone to remain.

"Were you here," asked Andy, "when the Germans came?" The older woman nodded.

"Until they came," she said. "Then we hid in the woods."

"You lived there?"

"Lived—after a fashion, monsieur."

"But how?"

"The good God knows. We are very thankful to be back here, monsieur"—she looked at the tottering walls of that single room—"back here in our home."

The American officers, the "Y" man said, were good to these people. There was food from the officers' mess sent them—the white bread of luxury—and sometimes there was money sent, too, though money was of small use out here, except at the "Y" canteen in a stable from which an emergency secretary had dug the manure on the morning previous. . . .

A mile or more down the road they called on a lieutenant. His quarters were in a not uncomfortable cottage.

"The kaiser slept in this room," he laughed. "I hope he enjoyed it less than I do." . . .

There were no civilians now—not even old widows. As the camion went along, there seemed to be nothing but roofless houses, through the blackened rafters of which, as the weather cleared, the stars began to shine. The cottagers had gone, and even their dogs were gone with them; but the cats remained and had reverted to the wild state of their first forefathers—it was dangerous to enter a ruin unprepared for attack from one of them. Silence and darkness and oppression that settle on a place deserted and in ruin, but once alive and populous—the weight of these was a weight that became almost physically sensible as one moved along that strip of pale road. Over there—very close over there now—the guns were roaring, yet here it seemed that they had already done all that guns can do.

Nearly, but not quite. Andy saw, close to the ground, a thread of radiance. Toward it his companion conducted him. They went down an unexpected flight of steps to it. Overhead was a house quite shot to pieces. Underneath the guide opened one curtain and then another and so discovered a vaulted chamber, perhaps fifteen feet square, in which, by flickering candlelight, a group of American soldiers were crowded to hear a phonograph that was playing *Sweet Genevieve*.

They were fresh from the trenches. The horror of death



was even yet pursuing them, but they bent before that phonograph as if it were some master instrument.

"Say," said one man, "did you come in an automobile?"

Andy confessed as much.

"Well, would you mind givin' me some o' your gasoline? I want it for my graybacks: they're gettin' the better o' me."

He knew all about graybacks—from experience. "They ain't so bad in the trenches," he said, "but these here deserted villages is full of 'em."

As Andy got him the gasoline, the Germans' guns began to direct their attention that way. They could see the shells falling along the road down which they must soon proceed. One came so close that its explosion shook stones from the building above and sent them crashing over the cellar where the phonograph was still playing *Sweet Genevieve*. They had not wholly changed their direction when the pair set out again.

Flashes began to come from the other side while the camion purred along—streaks of angry red—and there was a rush and whining in the sky as of monsters closing on their prey.

One — two — three — four!

One — two — three — four!

One — two — three — four!

"That's pretty good," said the "Y" man. "They're averaging six shots in about four seconds with the hundred-and-fifty-fives to-night."

"Who are?" asked Andy.

"We," he answered. "That's our artillery."

They had reached a spot where there was not even a ruin to obstruct the view. From somewhere on the left a great ball of light tore its way through the canopy of darkness. It was as if a shooting-star should fall from the nearer heavens in a constricted arc and break with sudden effulgence on the earth. It lit, for what seemed miles around, a stretch of brown swamp-land drawn away from a pair of hunching hillocks and, beyond these, a little chain of hills—a study in sepia.

"Those," said Andy's chauffeur, "are the American trenches—down there in the valley. Hereabouts, the Germans are on the side of the hills."

## XVI

Twenty minutes thereafter Andy was in a front-line trench for the second time in his life and, hating it as much as on the former occasion, was getting his first night-sight of No Man's Land.

If, at this point, one looked over the top, which was a dangerous business, because, as he was warned, "the Boche snipers were everlastingly at it," and if one then waited the fall of a star-shell or the rise of a rocket, what he saw was much what one might see anywhere along the great line in France. Just here, the horizon was blocked by dun hills, behind which were the German batteries and over which rose the rain of their shells. In front of these hills, and sometimes down their sides, ran the enemy first-line trenches, all but invisible to any eye save the eye military. Then, between that line and Andy stretched a field that was brown earth, pock-marked by craters, now shot bare of even the hardiest vegetation and again rank with blood-fed weeds rooted in carrion.

"That's No Man's Land," said one of the soldiers at Andy's back. "What do you think of it?"

"It looks like nothing at all," said Andy.

"It looks like hell," said the soldier. "And it is," he added.

A second soldier said: "It looks like the mountains in the moon."

The men wanted to know whether Andy had ever been in their home-towns, whether he had any news from "up the line," and when he thought the war would be over.

"These trenches are pretty bad right now," said one soldier, "and in real wet weather, when you try to sleep, you can hear the water slosh every time you turn over. But you just hear it: you don't feel it, after the first day or two. Yes, they're pretty bad now, but you had ought to see them when we took them over."

They were here, these men, for a week's stay. Then they would have a week of "rest" in one of the ruined villages through which Andy had recently passed. Once in four months, they were each to have a seven days' leave.

"We've got more men in the front line than the Dutch," Andy's informant told him, "and yet, right here, you have to walk quite a ways between men; this here barbed wire is good enough to fill the spaces. The other night a bunch of us crawled over to a German trench to pay a little call, and when we got into it, it was a case of 'nobody home.' We just gathered up a few helmets and things for souvenirs and came back."

"I guess ours is the nastiest work," an engineer explained, with a hopeful eye on Andy's correspondent's brassard—"especially when we have to go over the top and repair the barbed wire out there. We have to work in circles, so nobody can wriggle up behind us; you see, the Boche have a trick of sneaking on you while you're stooping over a busted wire and reaching around, pulling up your head and cutting your throat. It can be done by one motion of each hand. They do it because it's so quiet; the fellow that gets his is dead before he can holler, and then the German can sneak on to the next man. The Boche send soldiers on the job that have got in wrong for some little offense against discipline; it's punishment for them, and they're armed only with a knife and a revolver and told not to shoot unless they have to."

Andy learned that with nearly every company of infantry, when it was in the trenches, there lived a lieutenant of artillery. He was a liaison-officer and was just as necessary as the liaison-officers that were detailed to keep things smooth between the allied armies; for the infantry preserved its traditional dread lest the supporting artillery "shoot short," and the liaison-officer had to be on hand as a sort of hostage and to tell the doughboys what the big guns could do for them.

One heard all sorts of things—even ghost-stories. Andy listened with ears grown strangely credulous. A single room of what was once a farmhouse stood, or rather crouched, out there in No Man's Land. Recently some Americans had crept

to it for observation purposes. They found a bundle of straw on the floor. "This straw's warm," declared one soldier—the day was cold, and his hand detected easily the difference in temperature. "Somebody's been here before us." They smoothed the straw and left. Returning next day, they found that the straw had been disturbed in their absence. Then their French neighbors in the trenches told them that the house had long been known to be haunted. The superstition spread; it was dissipated only when a party of Americans went out by night to see the ghost and found him in the shape of several pigs—once tame, now wild—that had either been brought there when the Germans occupied that strip of land, or else survived from a still earlier epoch: the distant epoch when the farmhouse had a farm.

"Our barrage cut off a Boche raiding-party a few nights ago," said this man, "and then we turned our machine-guns on them. We'd killed a third when the rest tried to run in and surrender, but one of our lieutenants just yelled to us to give it to 'em, so we kept the gun going and wiped out the lot. I guess we got about three hundred; some of the other fellows say they got four hundred the same way a few nights later, but maybe they were just trying to tell a big one. You see, the Germans made a mistake when they sent back the first two Americans they'd captured—with their tongues cut out."

Andy talked with every one, from colonels down. He leaned against the greasy ironwork of a cold field-store and asked an amiable cook about food.

"Food?" the cook repeated. "Oh, sometimes the fellows get enough and sometimes they don't. The thing's uneven. That's what's the matter—its unevenness. I guess the transportation's to blame. There seems somehow to be something wrong with the War Department's tonnage-calculations.

"Of course, them at the bases are all right, and of course all the hospital-corps get theirs—you never see a hospital-orderly that doesn't look like a 'We're-advertised-by-our-loving-friends' sign. But with these line-regiments it's different. They work a fourteen-hour day and a seven-day week, and they need, generally speaking, more than they're getting.

"Taking the average, we give them a breakfast of bread and coffee, a dinner of slum or beans in the middle of the day, and a supper of beans or, once in a long while, beef.

"Feeding ourselves? Our army? Don't make me laugh! I know where our vegetables come from—they come right here from France. Our preserves are put up in American tins, with American sugar, but most of the stuff that's preserved is French stuff. I guess I ought to know.

"Take even the beef—what there is of it. I haven't seen any real U. S. beef since I don't know when. For even as long as up to last week, we were getting frozen Argentine and Spanish beef—we fellows that cook for the line-regiments. Then that gave out, somehow, and we got French beef, not frozen. The change from frozen to unfrozen was a little hard on a lot of the fellows' insides."

Yet the morale was excellent and excellent, too, the discipline. The army-relationships were, in many instances, established on a new basis.

"You can't consider as the dirt under your feet," a slim lieutenant told Andy, "the soldier that jumps into the same shell-shelter with you to get away from the same shell."

Common dangers bred fellow-feeling.

One day German guns opened on an American outlying battery and cut off relief. They cut also the connecting telephone wire. An artillery private volunteered to go to the edge of the scene, carrying wire and instruments, and then crawl up as close as was necessary for a report. By and by, he began telephoning to the captain whom he had left at the far end of the wire:

"I'm at the edge of things and starting in."—

"I'm getting there. The shells are falling between me and the battery, but only about a hundred yards off."—

"I'm in it now."—

"They're all right. I've fixed up the connection. What shall I do now?"

The captain's answer was instant:

"Stay, or come back—whichever's safer. And be sure to take good care of yourself."

## XVII

Good or bad, it was democracy in arms. Somehow, Andy's heart cried out to him, all the way back to Paris: If only the Germans would give us time!

## CHAPTER XV

### WHEREIN THE DRAGON SWALLOWS THE SUN

ANDY returned to Paris. He reached the Gare de l'Est and passed through the crowd of waiting women at the barrier, in midafternoon.

He had seen nothing of the reporters stationed at the camp, and, being hungry for talk with his kind, he tried, before going home, to find Evans and Innis. There was, however, no trace of them about their usual haunts: Andy, anxious to unburden himself of what he had seen, went to the office of the French official that had warned him of just how desperate matters were.

He sat in a third-floor room overlooking a little garden and the Cours-la-Reine. Across the river, long lean clouds of gray were racing, like charging legions, toward the meager sunshine. They seemed to him to be the massing forces of the enemy of which his host told him.

"You have done what you could," that official concluded: "You and the other journalists of whom I have made confidants. You have sent to your country the word that she must make haste, that what we, exhausted, must have is men. You have risked much to do this; more you can not do. On our part, we are bringing what pressure we dare to make your commanders see how they must allow all their troops to fight at once, and under us or the British. Your secretary of war is even now in London; there Mr. Lloyd George says to him what I say to him. All of us together, perhaps we may prevail; yet I tell you again that, unless we do prevail, this war is lost."

The muddle was too much. Andy choked a sob.

"I wish I could fight," he said. "I wish—oh, I wish I were

a million men! They told me I had something the matter with my heart. I don't believe there's anything wrong with my heart. I wish I could fight!"

In the next room a telephone-bell tinkled shrilly.

Andy's host smiled. "A few of us must do harder things than fight," said he. "You have had to incur the enmity of some of your own people. Before I asked it of you, I am informed, you had gone the way that, later, I urged you to go. If that avails, France will not forget you and your brave colleagues; if it does not avail, you will know that, though every American journalist in France joined the colors, it would not have helped at all—and alas, you can not be a million men!"

There was a sound of excited voices in the next room, but Andy, so young as to be just then chiefly concerned with himself, scarcely heard it. He walked rapidly to the window; he was afraid to let his face be seen.

"I know," he answered his host; "but I'm thinking—I'm kind of thinking about my own soul."

The door to the next room opened, and a whispered message came through.

"A moment," said the personage. "You will pardon me?"

Without turning, Andy nodded. He knew that he was left alone, and that was relief. He stood there, watching the galloping clouds that mounted, that leaped, toward the frightened sun. He stood there for some minutes.

Then he felt on his shoulder the hand of the returned officer, wheeled and found himself looking into a face from which every vestige of color had fled. Out of stiffened lips, the man was speaking:

"It has come," he was saying: "the great offensive. They are attacking on a seventy-five-mile front."

## II

Half an hour later, he was before a popular café. The pavement-tables were crowded with their usual guests: officers that listened to the chatter of women, men of business that talked trade to other men of business. None of them knew.



Andy sat down and bought the latest papers, but there were in them no tidings of the thing he knew to be happening. The clouds had achieved the zenith and were charging the western horizon, the oppressive atmosphere seemed big with the portentous event, and yet, of all the people about him, Andy must have been the only one aware of what impended. He was a helpless anthropomorphic god, knowing and grieving for his ignorant people, yet impotent to warn them.

Garcia was of these people: Garcia and the impudent Jacquette. Andy, as he tossed aside his third newspaper, saw them at a near-by table, but the somber lieutenant might have been none the wiser had not his black-haired slip of an Egeria willed otherwise. She gave Andy a glad nod and then, with a vermilion smile of malicious mirth, called Garcia's attention to the correspondent.

Garcia nodded sulkily. He was about to resume his conversation with Jacquette when he seemed to remember something. He stood up and began to edge his way toward Andy.

"Brown," he said, "there's something I want to see you about—"

### III

Andy staggered to his feet, with the crash of the explosion still deafening him. He knew, for a moment, only that something had fallen from heaven and burst and wrecked the café.

Tables and people lay overturned amid a clutter of broken glass. Women were shrieking. The wide front window of the restaurant gaped through jagged points of crystal. The officers and business men lay on the pavement, tangled among the bedraggled skirts of their companions. The street was full of people running.

*"Les avions!"* yelled somebody.

*"Mais non!"* retorted a soldier, his face covered with blood.

*"C'est un canon, ça!"*

Andy, his hearing returning with his other senses, reeled to that mass of people out of which he saw rising the tousled figure of Jacquette. Her hat was awry, her hair streaming. Save that she was pale under her rouge, she looked as she had

looked on the afternoon when he saw her struggling out of her lover's embraces at Lapérouse. He lifted her bodily free.

"Come away!" he shouted. "You must get out of this!"

In his excitement, he spoke English, but the circumstances would have made any language intelligible. Jacquette looked wildly about her.

"*Mais M. le lieutenant!*" she gasped.

Then she saw him: Garcia, without a glance behind him, was darting into the crowded street. As well as he could, he began to run away.

Jacquette shook her little fists. "*Cochon!*" she screamed. "*Quel soldat! Quel gallant! Cochon!*"

She turned to Andy.

"Monsieur is kind," she said. "Take me away before another bomb falls. There is an *abri* at the corner. Take me there."

All that part of Paris was seeking the *abris*. This was a *Métro* station. By the time Andy deposited her there, she had miraculously repaired the recent damage to her toilette. Amid the frenzied outcries of her jostling neighbors, who concluded that this was a daylight air-raid and that daylight raids on Paris were against the rules of the game, she raised her voice and took his hand:

"I shall not forget. You have perhaps saved my life. I shall repay."

#### IV

Sylvia was not at her hotel, whither he hurried, and she had left the place of her rehearsals long before. Andy, unable to find her, walked the streets until darkness fell—there were explosions every twenty minutes. He dined at a little Italian restaurant in the Passage Vivienne. Then he read the last edition of the *Temps*, which said that from an incredible distance, a long-range German gun was bombarding Paris.

On his way home, the siren sounded. The cannonading of the day was to be followed by an air-raid by night.

## CHAPTER XVI

### TREATS OF LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

MCGREGOR, in his gilt sitting-room at the Ritz, turned Sylvia's card about between his fingers and whistled softly.

"Tell her to come up," he said.

He walked to one of the many mirrors and straightened his black bow-tie. With a complacent hand, he smoothed the folds of his dinner-coat over the generous curves of his torso.

She found him thus engaged.

"Hello," he cried.

For her the past days had not been easy: there was a series of performances at the Foyers du Soldat within a fifty-mile radius of Paris, and there was beginning another series of rehearsals. These, and perhaps something more, had produced strain; only last night, arrived home after entertaining soldiers at a Paris "Y," she had burst into tears when the icy flow from both taps in her tub reminded her that that was not the hotel's day for hot water: she cried herself to sleep. And now there had come a letter—

All this, nevertheless, McGregor could not have conjectured: Sylvia was none to let depression long continue; though her even brows flew their signal of perplexity, she took comfort of hope from the higher artistic possibilities evinced by the new sketch that she was rehearsing, and in an important message received when, to compliment her work, a great French general gave her a confidential interview and thanked her for what she was doing in the Foyers. Tried and distressed as she was, she bore a rekindled radiance.

"Well, this is mighty good of you: to come and see me." McGregor, as if to demonstrate the sincerity of his words,

held her hand an instant longer than a formal greeting requires.

"I didn't know"—she released her hand—"whether it was all right to call on you—"

"I guess yes!"

"But Andy—Mr. Brown—happened to say you lived here, and there was something I wanted your advice about."

"I guess I know what that is," McGregor chuckled: "My advice is 'Go.'"

Sylvia's pucker deepened. "I don't think I understand."

"Go. Get out of Paris. That wasn't an air-raid to-day: it was a gun. They've started the big offensive."

"Oh," said Sylvia. "Yes, I know; but I wasn't thinking of leaving."

"What?" McGregor could not appreciate such an attitude; besides, he preferred his surmises to be proved correct. "But you've got to. They may have a revolution here—Bolshevik or royalist—anything. There's a good chance the line won't hold: I've got it straight. Paris isn't a fit place for a woman."

"I'm not afraid," said Sylvia.

"Then you ought to be. I'll go myself, if it gets much worse. We're all packed up and the tickets bought to Bordeaux." The wave of his short arms indicated the adjoining apartment as a veritable baggage-room.

"Yes," said Sylvia, "but it's different with me. I suppose you're just here for yourself. I'm under orders."

He drew up a chair, and she took it.

"Orders? What do they amount to? You're not in the army."

"I'm in the 'Y.'"

"But the 'Y' can't make you obey orders."

"I know. You see, that's just why I have to obey them."

He didn't see it at all. Sylvia's eyes that told Andy of high visions told McGregor only that they were clear and bright; Sylvia's face, in which Andy saw the reflection of all that was best in himself, showed McGregor but a pretty, if puzzling, woman.

"Then come to this hotel. We've got the safest cellars in Paris here: the man that built the place"—McGregor winked—"said he was a Swiss. I've been down there nearly all afternoon."

"I couldn't afford to change, and really"—she smiled denial of his idea to the contrary and thanks for his kindly interest—"really, I'm not at all scared."

"Where are you stopping now?" he demanded, and, when she had told him, began: "Look here, Miss Raeburn, if you need any money, you know—"

"Oh, no!" Her protest almost brought her to her feet. "It's the other way. It's about sending—some money that I came to see you."

"Any friend of young Brown's—"

"No, really. Thank you, but I've got lots. I want to send some to America. I've just been to the American Express Company, and there was a letter there—" Her fingers interlaced. "I must send some money, and I didn't read the letter until I got opposite this hotel. The express-offices are closed by now, and I have to rehearse the first thing in the morning—and there's reason for hurry. So I thought of you."

He said he would be very glad to attend to the whole matter. Above their dark pouches, his hazel eyes gazed at her very steadily.

"Just give me the money, and the name and address," he explained, "and I'll send you the receipt first thing to-morrow. You want this to go by cable, I suppose?"

"Why, yes," said her lips. Her eyes said: "How did you know?"

It was her eyes he answered: "I thought you would."

He showed her to a desk, and she wrote a check on her Paris bank. McGregor folded the bit of paper, and, without a glance, put it into a waistcoat pocket.

Reseated, he poised his gold pencil above a morocco memorandum-book.

For the fraction of a second, he read hesitation in her eyes. Then, in a lowered voice, she said:

"The first name is Ainslee. The last name—the last name is the same as mine, but spelled with a 'y' instead of an 'e': R-a-y-b-u-r-n."

There was perhaps a slight tightening of McGregor's lips; his gray mustache hinted at some movement there, but his face, as he wrote the name, did not alter.

"And the address?"

She gave him a number in St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans.

"There you are," he said, chuckling. "You needn't bother any more. It'll be in America by two o'clock to-morrow afternoon. Now, I tell you what you do: you stay here and have a little dinner with me."

"Oh, no, thank you. I—couldn't."

"Any friend of Andy's—" he encouraged her.

"No. It's very kind of you, and you're very kind about the money—"

She had remained standing after she rose from the desk; he, perforce, rose also. "Oh, that's all right," he said.

The faintest of flushes mounted to her creamy cheek.

"I know; I'm so sorry, Mr. McGregor, but I have another engagement: I have, really."

She was final. He saw her to the lift. Like a good American, he used the lift for descent as well as ascent wherever Paris authorities permitted. As the elevator slowly ascended, he said:

"D'you ever hear the story of the husband that talked in his sleep, Miss Raeburn? His wife heard him muttering. It was near Easter-time, and she'd been asking for a hat. She heard him say 'Jennie,' and says she to herself: 'That's me,' and she listened. 'Jennie,' she heard him say, 'has just got to have that new hat, even if I have to fire the second bookkeeper, though it's hard, because he's got the t-b., and is the only support of his widowed mother.' An' the wife, she says to herself: 'He's just as mean as he can be: I don't believe he's asleep at all.' Married life's a funny thing, Miss Raeburn, isn't it? Here's the elevator at last. Some day they'll wake up and get real American elevators over here. Sure you can't

stay to dinner? Well then, good-by—and don't worry any more about the money."

When he had returned to his sitting-room, he looked at the check. It was drawn for two thousand five hundred francs.

"St. Charles Avenue," he reflected. "That's a good old-fashioned part of the town."

## II

Her engagement was with herself at the Théâtre Français. Here, as she had done at the Ritz, she left Tac in the care of an attendant and contented herself with a *fauteuil d'orchestre*. Her seat, without its war-tax, cost her eight francs, and the tip to Tac's guardian cost her ten, but the chance to profit by either expenditure was brief. She had not heard the first scene of *Le Misanthrope* when the shriek of an air-raid warning abruptly ended the performance.

The house emptied with an ordered quickness eloquent of practice; but Sylvia, hunting through the crowd in the lobby, could find no trace of the man to whom she had entrusted her dog. She questioned the *agent* who stood stolidly by the box-office: he knew nothing. She sought to detain hurrying attendants: they shook her off. From the street came the long yell of the siren, ear-piercing. The crowd, surging outward, bore her with it.

Somebody cried: "This is a bad one! You know well that the offensive has begun!"

Soldiers and civilians, men and women, made a rush for the doubtful shelter of the *Métro* station in the Place du Palais Royal. A glance from the nearest stair-top showed Sylvia that it was filled to overflowing. She fought her way into the dark Galérie d'Orléans. She had no fear; she had the common sense to know that to remain out-of-doors during a raid was mere foolhardiness, and it occurred to her that the cellars of this building, being old, must be heavily vaulted. Nevertheless, she did not want safety at the price of Tac, and she was about to return to the theater when there came the swift pad of running paws behind her, the scrape of suddenly

arrested feet, and the dog thrust his damp cool muzzle into her palm.

She hugged him. Somehow, he had escaped his keeper and, trailing his leash, found her out. Sylvia seized the plaited thong, made her way through a narrow passage into the rue de Valois and started for Number 43. Andy might have returned; he might be there. Even were he not, she could doubtless gain admission to the cellar by declaring herself his acquaintance.

She ran to the last entrance before the street's end at its juncture with the rue de Beaujolais. Tac, preceding, ran into and upset a man that crouched there: the sky was bright, and Sylvia could see that he wore a cap pulled far down over his face, but before she could apologize, he had leaped to his feet and darted around the corner. Then Mme. Lafon, Andy's concierge, answered her ring and, upon her explanation, conducted her to the cellars.

### III

At that time, one had twenty minutes between the sounding of the siren and the beginning of the air-barrage: the news of the enemies' advance was flashed to Paris as soon as German planes crossed the lines, and the alarm sounded forthwith. Sylvia's delay had, however, been none too brief; the sky rattled as she descended below-ground, and a little later began the reverberation of the bombs.

The cellars of the Palais Royal, dimly lit by candles in improvised sconces and already floating in a faint haze of cigarette smoke, were really a series of deep and heavily vaulted tunnels, with many cubicles opening off them, doubtless originally devised for wine-bins. In these cubicles, furnished with hastily brought carpets, chairs and tables, huddled wrapped figures like those which line the docks of a channel-steamer during a nasty crossing: shop-keepers of the neighborhood, well-to-do bourgeois and their servants, waiters and dishwashers from Véfour's, all reduced to a common level and all exchanging opinions as if they had been lifelong acquaintances.



In the best corners, *permissionnaires* lay sleeping among their blankets: knowing best what bombardments might be, they were the first to seek shelter. In the cubicle nearest the street, a stout woman knelt before a candle that, Mme. Lafon whispered, had been blessed and was preserved by its owners against just such occasions as the present.

Sylvia, received as a matter of course, sat for a while, with Tac curled dutifully at her feet, in a row of fugitives. A couple of men, before her, were playing cards on the flagged floor. The other occupants of the cubicle speculated on the length of the raid and its intensity; children ran in from the corridors, laughing at a game of tag. Whenever the dulled sound-waves of an explosion penetrated the cellar, they were echoed in a chorus of long-drawn ah-h-h's, the people shivering and crossing themselves and declaring that this last bomb was nearer than any of its predecessors.

An hour passed. Sylvia, despite the wraps of which kindly fellow-sufferers dispossessed themselves in order to warm her, felt cold. For all that they were so securely walled, the cellars were not dry, and everybody was soon coughing. Some property of the air made her very drowsy. Once, a laughing child ran up to her.

"*Vous êtes américaine, mademoiselle?*" he asked.

She told him that she was. "And you?" she inquired.

"A little French soldier," he assured her. He was not more than five years old; probably he had no recollection of a Paris that was not at war. "But when I grow up," he added, "I'm going to be the man that sounds the siren."

She fell asleep. Waking, she feared that she might take a cold that would interfere with her work. She would have started at once for her hotel, but to such a proposal good Mme. Lafon would not listen. The concierge at last compromised with M. Brown's friend by conducting her to Andy's garret workroom—"For he is *en voyage*," she said—and leaving her alone there with the dog. . . .

## IV

Andy had been caught by the air-raid much as was Sylvia; like her he wearied of his *abri*; but Andy, when tired of it, walked through the streets emptied by terror, straight home. In the excitement of the attack, Mme. Lafon must have forgotten to latch the street door after admitting Sylvia: he found it standing half open, brushed against somebody crouching in the darkness and, accounting this unseen as a frightened neighbor, ascended without pause to his rooms.

He entered quietly, yet he had no sooner done so than a silent something flew at his throat. His arms clutched a hairy figure, and he crashed against the passage-wall.

## V

It was over in an instant. The animal—he realized now that it must be a dog—had him at its mercy, and yet surrendered its advantage as quickly and as silently as it had achieved it. Andy's hand, seeking his coat pocket for matches, was given a shamed caress.

He struck a light.

"Why, Tac!" he cried.

The dog circled him, cringing ever so little by way of apology and wagging a tail held low.

Andy bent toward his recent assailant. It must be Tac—it was: the collar said so.

"Come here," said Andy.

Tac leaped toward him but, when he put out his hand again, jumped a few paces forward, stopped abruptly and looked back. It was a plain invitation to follow.

The match burning his fingers, Andy accepted. He passed by his kitchen through the dining-room and bedroom and, at the door of the workroom, tossed the match away.

Both the windows were unshuttered which looked over the stone balustrade and up the length of the Palais Royal gardens. Through them poured the pale silver of the clear night,

and curled in an armchair beside the farther was a girlish figure, before which Andy came almost to his knees.

The barrage had momentarily lessened, but there sounded, as if close overhead, the whirr of French planes and the pump-pump of Gothas; a dull explosion, followed by the long noise of falling masonry, told of another bomb successfully dropped in the Quarter; yet there, her hands lying loose in her lap, her golden head drooping to one side, Sylvia, relaxed and unconscious, slept like a child.

Tac woke her. He knew Andy for a friend, but he plainly demonstrated that he would permit no nearer approach until he had awakened her. He trotted to her, raised one paw and quietly pressed it against her knee.

She got up and stood facing Andy, for a moment with eyes wide but not yet fully conscious. Tinted by the green curtains, the night-light of the sky bathed her, intensifying her virginal radiance, making her seem a statue wrought of ice. It was his early dream come true: he thought her armored, he looked for a casque upon her head; hers were the lips of high adventure, her glance the glance of excellent duty—“*un lis d'une beauté admirable.*”

Then she comprehended:

“Andy!—You’re back?—I was in the cellars. I’d been caught by the raid—I’ll go.”

Another bomb fell in the Quarter. It restored realization.

He came to her and took her hand. “You *must* go. You must go back to the cellars. It’s not safe here.”

But she would not listen to that. “It was too stuffy. I should take cold. I’ll go home,” She drew her coat about her.

“You’ll not do anything of the kind!”—He thought he saw her cut by some tossed fragments.—“The streets are twice as dangerous as the houses. They’re full of flying glass.” He had been helping her with her coat; his arms were around her. He thrilled at touching her waist. “Sylvia!”

She darted away. She opened the folding window and, Tac at her heels, gained the balcony.

“Sylvia!” He started after her.

She reopened the window from the outside, ever so little, and smiled into his face not six inches from her own. This was a new Sylvia: a roguish one!

"I have a piece of news for you," she said. "If you promise—"

"Come in."

"—not to make me go down-stairs—"

"Come in!"

"—I'll give it to you and then let you walk home with me after the raid's over; but—"

"Do come in!"

"If you won't, I'll stay out here and—"

"I'll come through the other window!"

"—run on down the balcony and not let you drag me back!"

"But, Sylvia—"

"It's important news, Andy." She was very serious now. "It may mean the winning of the war."

## VI

Of course she had her way with him. He brought her in; he closed the shutters to protect the glass, already slightly protected by its strips of paper pasted diagonally like lattice-work—there was little glass left for repairing in Paris—and drew the curtains to hide the light. Then he started a fire in the grate and bundled her up in an armchair beside it. Only after all this was accomplished, among the recurrent noises of the raid, and after he had moved his lamp and writing-table to the hearthside, did he let her tell him her news.

She had met a great French general through her work at the Foyers, and been guaranteed through intimate friends. The soldier had let fall a word plainly indicating his doubt of assistance, now desperately required, from American troops: the American enlisted men were excellent, but their general staff, itself unready, would not enter the fight and would not let its forces enter under any other staff; to save the world, this decision, if decision, must be overcome and the United

States made aware of the immediate need of more men and still more; etiquette forbade the general a direct appeal to the American public, and yet that was now the single hope. Sylvia mentioned Andy; she gave parts of several days to persuasion and to securing assurances of Andy's reliability. At last, the general dictated to her the notes for an interview expressing his opinions. These she carried always with her. If Andy would write from them and submit the result for the general's approval, the French Foreign-Office would see that the interview was cabled, uncensored, to America.

Andy could not think it true, but she proved it.

"It's splendid!" he cried, his eyes running over the papers still warm from her bosom. "It's the biggest story since 1914, and, what's more, it'll be doing a big thing for America!" Suddenly, he looked up at her. "And you did all this for me!"

"I did it," she said, "because I want us to win this war!"

"Gee," said Andy, "you're a—a regular—There isn't anybody as wonderful as you are—not anywhere, there isn't!"

The fire leaped in the grate. It showed his worshipping eyes, his trembling lips.

She shook her head. "I'm not wonderful at all," she said. "Don't tell me so. You hurt me when you do. I'm—at the best of times, I'm only commonplace."

He laughed at that. "Why, who else in all the world—"

"Write," said Sylvia.

He sat down to obey her. On the table were some letters that Mme. Lafon had put there during his absence. Only one would he now pause to open, but the envelope of that bore the seal of the British Embassy.

"Look here!" he cried. His glance betrayed consternation as he handed it to her.

She read: "I beg leave to inform you that I have this day been informed by the British Military Intelligence that they are unable to arrange for a visit at the time suggested for you, and it is regretted . . . ? *What does it mean?*"

"It means more than it says," Andy choked. "It means they're never going to let me take that trip you fixed for me."

"But they told me it was all right."

Somehow the picture of Garcia swung into Andy's brain. "Somebody's been after me. Somebody's set them against me!" He sank into the chair beside the table. "I'll find out about this," he vowed.

"Garcia, perhaps," said Sylvia.

"They'll try anything. They told me so—Garcia did."

Her eyes sparkled indignation, but what she said was:

"Write."

## VII

He wrote rapidly, tossing the notes into the fire page by page, as he finished with them. Aeroplanes and the barrage sounded overhead; bombs burst in the city. Neither Sylvia nor Andy heeded them.

## VIII

As the work finished, there came that hopeful hush which fell always between the last explosion of an air-raid and the bugled assurance of its ending. In it, Andy, having weighted his completed manuscript upon the table, drew his benefactor, with Tac following, through the now reopened window and on to the stone balcony.

The old gardens swung below them like a silvered fairyland seen from the basket of a languidly moving balloon; above, a million stars shed their white radiance out of an indigo heaven. For any sound that climbed to the balcony, the quiet that followed the recent dreadful clamor might have been the quiet of a city slain. Only from some fortification far beyond the left bank of the river, the seeking finger of a searchlight hovered over the pages of the sky.

Sylvia looked at the stars, and Andy looked at Sylvia. There, her white hands touching the ancient balustrade, her face upraised to the eternal canopy, she seemed more than ever the Jeanne d'Arc of his early dreams, more than ever worshipful and so more than ever remote. A broken breath trembled from his lips.

"It's over," he said. "There isn't any danger now."

The jangle of a bell set a period to his sentence. Toward that sound, Tac darted noiselessly.

Sylvia was at once a woman. She shot him a startled glance. Her fingers closed upon his nearer wrist.

"What's that?"

"My bell. I guess it's Mme. Lafon looking for you." He stepped inside.

She followed him. "Be careful."

"What of?" laughed Andy. He had struck a match and, as he held it in his cupped hands, the red light shone over his red hair. "You don't think a pair of Boche aviators have landed on the roof of the Palais Royal?"

"I don't know what to think." With one hand, she was restraining the quietly recalled Tac, the other she put toward Andy's back, as he preceded her through the dark room. "That note from the Embassy has made me nervous."

Lighting the gas-jet in the tiny hall, Andy was too pre-occupied to attend to her. He next drew back the deadlatch and flung wide the door.

"Well," he said in French, "what do you wish, monsieur?"

He was addressing a stooped man whose face was hidden by a cap drawn far over the nose.

"Pardon, monsieur," the visitor replied. He took one step across the threshold. "I regret that I have deranged you"—he craned his neck—"you and madame."

"Mademoiselle," Andy corrected. "You have not deranged us. What do you want?"

"A thousand pardons." The man edged inward. "I thought that I was ringing at the apartment of a friend."

"This is my apartment," said Andy.

"I have a friend that lives in this house," the stooping man went on, but somehow Andy felt that those eyes, shadowed by the visor of the cap, were intent on other matters—"and I mistook in the darkness your room for his. Perhaps I have come one flight too high. I was confused by the noises of the raid."

He edged yet another step into the hallway, but there Andy placed himself so as to bar farther progress.

"Then you climb slowly," he said. "It has been very quiet for some time. Good night, monsieur."

Evidently, the fellow realized an impasse. Though with an ill grace, he retreated. The instant that he cleared the doorway, he was merged in the gloom of the hall. Out of that his voice came mockingly:

"Good *day!*"

Andy closed the door. With his back against it, he looked at Sylvia, puzzled:

"What do you think of that?"

"I passed him when I came down the rue de Valois. Tac ran into him."

"He lives around here. I've noticed him before."

"He's not a Frenchman," said Sylvia. She was breathing quickly. "Didn't you notice. He put a 'g' on the end of his *bon*."

Andy laughed. "Oh, well, I guess he's just a nosy neighbor."

"I don't know. You ought to be careful, Andy. You know what Garcia said to you."

At that Andy laughed more heartily. "What could this have to do with that? You don't think he'd hire somebody to murder me in bed?"

Her eyes, always fathomless, contained an answer. It floated almost on the surface.

"Not that," she said.

"Well, then?"

She looked away, her brows puckered:

"I—I don't know."

It was wonderful to be able to reassure her, to be for a quick moment the masculine protector of his guardian angel. "Of course you don't. There isn't anything to know. It's all right. You're just nervous."

As if to confirm his declaration of safety, there came from some street the distant notes of the glad *berloque*: the bugles sang the news that the raid was indeed over.

"There," he said; "that's the 'all-clear' signal." The bugle-notes drew nearer. "Back home," he said, "they have a band



that plays in the tower of one of the churches just before sun-up every Christmas morning. It's like that, this is."

## IX

She encouraged him to talk more of Americus, as they went, with the delicious intimacy of darkness, down the worn old stairs; and he kept it up while, she having thanked Mme. Lafon, who welcomed Andy, they walked along the *Galérie de Beaujolais* and looked, between the iron bars, into the garden. He told her of "Babe" Campbell, the solitary but militant policeman of Americus; of the social life of Ladies' Aid Societies; how the raising of a church-mortgage used to seem as long a struggle, and as momentous as the war seemed now; of how the elder people had always been elderly and how the younger never grew old; of Blunston, and of his own mother: of her especially.

Tac padded beside them, with a guarding nose against all things strange. He showed them that a careless guard had left one of the gates open, and they slipped through it and made a tour of the garden. It was almost morning, and they had a long walk ahead of them. The glory of the stars had not yet paled, and in it he could see her face.

"Some day you'll go back there," she said. "But you'll always have had your part in the big world, after this."

Andy fetched a sigh. "After this! God knows when this war'll end—or how. Of course, there's still a chance from publicity; there's this interview: if the people only learn the truth—"

She stopped short. "You forgot to give it to me," she said.

"The interview? I didn't forget: I left it up there because I want to revise it and get a clean copy for the general. I'll bring that to your hotel by the time you're getting up. How are you going to get it to him?"

Some one in the French Foreign-Office, it appeared, was to attend to that, and so they talked rather of the interview's effect.

"I don't know," said Andy. "You can never tell. It might

stir up the whole country, and yet it might have no effect at all. I don't see how we'll ever come through!"

For a bare instant, she took his fevered hand in her cool, firm grasp.

"The men are going to win," she said; "they'll win through their sacrifices, no matter how badly they're capitalized: that's how it will end. And something or somebody will *make* us send the men."

"If France and England can hold out that long—"

"Oh," she cried, "don't you see? It's *got* to come out all right, because the thing we want to fight for is so much bigger than all the politicians and profiteers put together!"

Her earnestness, the innocent certitude of her faith—these and, no less perhaps, the childlike appeal of her mouth, the beauty of her face, the direct gaze of her triumphant eyes—conquered him. The vitality of her loveliness suffused the night. He felt, in this minute, that righteousness must win because she was on its side.

x

He came back from her hotel in the gray dawn, knowing at last that he loved her and that she was too wonderful for him ever to attain. He might not even tell her. . . .

When he reentered his rooms, he saw that, during his absence, they had been robbed. The manuscript of the interview was missing.

## CHAPTER XVII

PROVES THAT GRATITUDE MAY WARM THE BASEST BOSOMS, AND  
GIVES ONE RECIPE FOR A COMMISSION IN THE CENSORSHIP

HE WOULD not go back to Sylvia's hotel until she would have had some chance for rest after such a night; but the sound of the big gun's morning salutation to Paris found him in the rue du Faubourg-St.-Honoré, waiting the opening of the British Embassy. Nearly all of his papers had disappeared out of the attic in the Palais Royal, including some of the letters that he had addressed, and never sent, to Sylvia; the letter he had written, by candlelight, in the uncarpeted inn-room, and carried next his heart: he had put it tenderly with his other letters to her; now that was gone, too. Of the interview, not even a trace remained, and he realized that, having destroyed the notes and being thus unable to rewrite it in the general's words, the great opportunity was probably forever lost: if, as he suspected, the American censorship had inspired the theft, to bear the tale of it to the French would avail nothing—and the general himself would now be away at Grand Headquarters, bending every energy to withstand the offensive. Mme. Lafon had been innocent and ignorant: nobody had entered by the street-doors during his absence; but somebody could have entered one of the neighboring houses and come to Andy's rooms by the balcony that ran behind them all, or the man in the cap, of whom the concierge knew nothing, could have hidden on the stairway after Andy dismissed him.

The man that he waited—Dakyns, the English officer, with whom he had made the necessary negotiations for the trip to the British front—was the first of its officials to arrive at the office. He had taken an immediate liking to the lad. Andy produced the letter from the Embassy.

"Why, yes," said Dakyns, "I can tell you a bit about this affair. The trip was canceled as a result of information about you sent us by the American Military Intelligence."

"What sort of information?"

Dakyns flushed a little. "Well, as to that, you know, I'd better leave you to guess, hadn't I?"

"That I'd broken censorship-rules?"

"Oh, no. Everybody breaks them."

Andy had felt sure of his guess. Now his imagination failed him.

"Well, it was all confounded rot, of course. I knew that, knowing you. Only, you see, the etiquette of the service makes us observe any caution sent us by our allies. It's purely formal."

"But what was it?"

"Really, I've said a lot more than I ought to. You'll have to ask your own people, and you mustn't say just who it was told you. It's only some mistake in identification. They'll straighten it out soon enough; then you drop me a line, and we'll get you down to our front any time you say."

## II

Andy stopped at a café and wrote to the chief of the American Military Intelligence. He said that he was informed that information against him had been lodged with the British. "As a matter of fair play, I ask you," he concluded, "to let me know what you condemned me for without giving me a hearing."

Then he inquired at one boulevard café after another until, having expended some ten francs in tips, he found a waiter that knew Jacquette's address. He found her abed in a squalid back-room in a *maison meublée* that faced the Passage de l'Industrie. She sat up among the rumpled pillows, a very tousled Jacquette, and expressed a desire to embrace her preserver.

The preserver replied that he would prefer some information. He had never before entered any woman's bedroom save his mother's, and his cheeks were scarlet.

"*Eh bien.*" She shrugged her thin shoulders under the soiled nightgown. "You were very *gentil* and very brave. I hope well that I can help you, my little friend, and I shall be *très contente* if I discommode that cowardly pig of a lieutenant: he ran away from the *obus*—and, besides, he owes me ten louis."

"Did he ever talk to you about me?" asked Andy.

"Very often." She leaned alarmingly far out of bed, secured a hand-mirror from the dressing-table and began, with implements brought out of the bed-clothes, to redden her lips and cheeks. "Very often and never well. It was that which made you so interesting."

"Somebody robbed my rooms last night," said Andy, "and took a valuable paper."

Jacquette's head was tilted to one side. Her lower jaw was drawn far down while she rubbed at a cheek. "Then you may be well certain that paper is now in the rooms of my Lieutenant Pig."

Andy had not seated himself. He drew nearer her. "How do you know?"

"He has often said that some day he would have you robbed."

"Where does he live? Tell me that, please."

"But of course I shall tell you!" She put aside the rouge and produced a powder-puff. "It is on the first floor over the little *bureau de tabac* at the corner of the rue Cambon and the rue Mont Thabor."

Andy offered, awkwardly, to shake hands. "I—I'm very much, very, very much obliged to you."

"But it is nothing!" laughed Jacquette. "In fine, it pleases me. Go there and pull his nose this very evening." She gave Andy a sudden jerk toward her and kissed him. "There, do not have fear of me. It is well understood that you have a sweetheart of your own, young monsieur!"

For celerity, Andy's retreat rivaled that of Garcia.

## III

Perhaps the young man was learning the practice of guile from experiencing the effects of it. Certainly, whatever he might decide to do later, it seemed best that he first meet Garcia in a manner calculated to lull the flames of the lieutenant's suspicion and reveal the bed-coal of his purpose. Andy accordingly presented himself at the press-division's quarters in the rue Ste. Anne wearing his most boyish manner and, being immediately admitted to Garcia's office, entered it decorously.

Garcia was alone, his feet on the flat-topped desk, a toothpick between his lips. He pushed his caller a lacquered box.

"Morning," he said. His smiles had always seemed difficult; when the toothpick was in its accustomed place, they were seldom attempted: nevertheless, he now achieved one. "Have a cigar, and sit down."

"Thanks," said Andy. He sat down opposite Garcia; he took a cigar and lighted it.

"Put another one in your pocket. Take a couple."

"I will," said Andy. He took three.

"That was a close shave we had yesterday," said the lieutenant.

Andy agreed. "I see you weren't hurt. Was the lady?"

"Not a bit. A cat always falls on its feet."

"What became of you?" Andy ventured.

"Me?" Garcia elevated his black brows. "Oh, I got the girl out, and then we saw some women'd fainted across the street, and so I walked over to see if I could do anything for 'em.—Where've you been all this time? You haven't been around here lately."

"I've been busy with another kind of work."

Garcia grinned knowingly. "Well, you know I said I wanted to see you."

"Yes. I'm sorry now I was so long getting here."

"I thought you might be. Now, lemme tell you what it was I wanted to see you about—"

"Just a minute, and I will." Andy knocked the first ash

from his cigar. "After the raid last night, somebody robbed my rooms."

It was apparently to make his smile the more sour that Garcia temporarily removed his toothpick. "Hard luck. Lose much?"

"Some papers."

"Personal?"

"And business."

"Did you go to the police?"

"The French police?"

"Yes."

"I didn't think it was a case for them."

"Well," said Garcia—he replaced the toothpick and ran his fingers through the jungle of his hair—"did you think we could do anything for you?"

"I knew," said Andy, trying to make Garcia's eyes meet his own, "that your division was under the Army Secret Service."

"It sure is. We've got all kinds of people working for us—men and women. Generally, though, the women don't pull off the tricks: they just get things ready."

This struck Andy as a strange aside. "I thought you might be useful."

"We might be." Garcia did not change his position, but he just noticeably paused before he added: "To our friends."

It was Andy's turn to pause. When he spoke, however, it was evenly. "You don't consider me one?"

"What's your game?" asked Garcia. "Why won't you work with us? What have you got it in for us for?"

"I'll give you an example. I've been down at our sector, and didn't have to have a pass to get there. I saw a lot of things, but I heard one that'll do. You had a little raid on the Boche down there. It cost you three million dollars, and you lost a third of your men. You sent four hundred men over the top, and a hundred would've been plenty. I'm against that sort of waste."

"We've got to learn."

"And we haven't any men to speak of in France, and aren't sending any, and yet the war's going to be lost if we don't."

Oh,"—he had to check himself—"I'm against all that sort of thing: the lies and the bad clothes and the lack of planes and guns and ammunition—all of it! I'm against all Innis said he was against, and Evans, the last time I was in here."

Garcia heard him without moving a muscle.

"Well, now," he said in a matter-of-fact manner, "I know we've had our little rows, you and me; but I haven't got anything against you personally, and I believe you could be of some use to your country, if you'd only begin by being sensible. You want to be of use to your country, don't you?"

"Do you think I'd run the chances I'm running with your people if I didn't want to be?"

"Then you ought to understand, Brown, that this is a war an' that people've got to get killed in it." Garcia was attempting a palliative tone. "You ought to understand that there's got to be some things that look bad for a while, because they're big, and there are big interests involved—interests of the country—that make 'em necessary."

"Such as shoes nobody can wear?"

"Exactly that. We can't tell everything we know, Brown."

Andy's brown eyes narrowed, but almost imperceptibly.

"Well," he said in a smooth voice, "suppose I did understand that?"

"You know the newspaper-game."

Garcia relieved the desk of his feet and slowly rose. "You'd make a good lieutenant in the press-division, Brown."

Andy cleared his throat. "The army turned me down once."

"What for?"

"Something about a heart-murmur.—Oh, but I'm perfectly strong."

"We could get around that."

It was a plain offer of what Andy had once so desired. He, too, rose.

"What would I have to do?" he asked.

"You'd be useful in the censorship. You could make things easier for the newspaper-boys and explain 'em to the army."

"I'd want to fight."



"You—" Garcia's eyes were round in unbelief. "You, what?"

"I'd want to fight."

"Well, I guess that could be fixed easy enough."

"But what would I have to do first?"

"And I might find those papers for you."

"But what would I have to do *first*?"

Garcia licked his lips before replying. "Just one thing. Understand, like I said, that these mistakes you've made such a fuss over are excusable if you only knew what's back of 'em—just that and writing a couple of articles that say so."

"Then the little fellow in the cap who hung around my rooms was a Secret Service man?"

"He might 'a' been, Brown."

"There've been charges lodged with the British."

"I'd call them off."

"And I'll get a commission—a commission and my papers—if I take back all I've written?"

"You'll get a commission an' all your papers except the interview."

"How do I know I'd get the commission?"

"You needn't hand me your denial till I hand you the commission."

Andy turned toward the door. "Good-by," he said.

"You'll do it?" Garcia came eagerly after him.

"Do it?" Andy wheeled back. His freckled face flamed, his eyes snapped fire, his red hair seemed fairly to bristle. "Do it? What do you think I am? Do you think I'm what you are? I only wanted to see how far you'd go. Get out of my way!"

Garcia, his cheeks livid, had slipped between his caller and the door. With the ruin of his expectations, his old manner was returned and with it a more venomous anger.

"You don't know what you're up against!" he whispered.

"I know it's not the army. I know it's only a gang of dirty politicians, in uniform and out. But if it was the whole earth, I wouldn't take your rotten bribe!"

"You'll be fired."

"I told you before I resigned my credentials long ago."

"What do we care for that? Your bond'll be forfeited. You'll be fired anyhow. You'll be sent home under arrest." Garcia, his back to the door, had flung out his arms to bar Andy's passage. His head, thrust toward the correspondent, writhed like an adder's.

"If you don't get out of my road," said Andy with regained composure, "I'll put you out."

"I've got you framed every way, this time," Garcia threatened. "Don't go thinkin' you can get away with one thing."

"Move out, now," said Andy.

"And another thing," Garcia said between his teeth, "an accredited correspondent's an officer. We can prefer charges of immoral conduct against you. You had a woman in your rooms last night, an' we know who it was!"

Andy uttered no word of reply. He stepped slowly back, his clenched fists at his sides.

Then, throwing all his force into it, he shot out his right arm. His whole body was behind it.

It struck on the point of Garcia's drooping jaw.

The censor crumpled to the floor.

Andy stepped over the body and out of the room.

"The lieutenant needs attention," he said to the military clerk at the typewriter outside.

As he proceeded toward the Place de la Concorde, he mechanically wiped his knuckles with his handkerchief. He felt that they must be dirty. Presently, he tossed the handkerchief away.

#### IV

On what might happen to him as punishment for his defiance of power and assault upon power's vice-regent he was too young and too very angry to reflect; how the vast opportunity of the interview was doubtless ruined—an opportunity that Andy conceived of national, or even world-wide, import—he quite frankly dared not consider; but this last insult from Garcia and its more than probable bearing upon Sylvia rose

like the genie from the bottle and darkened all the sky. Had he been an older, and therefore less brave, man, he might have wondered whether physical restraint had not been, in the clear interests thus involved, more expedient; being what he was, he saw only that, since the presence of Sylvia in his midnight rooms became facilely explicable to a suspicious world solely when not involved with the presence of sacredly intimate letters and verses addressed to her, he owed her, first, a certain warning, and, next, some still further bold advance directed toward reconquest of the stolen manuscripts. Somehow (he had as yet no conception how) he would make forcible recovery; meantime, he ought to warn her of the present danger.

Yet, in the hotel drawing-room, whither she brought the very spirit of the morning on the face and in the hands of a girl that seemed to have enjoyed the fullest night's rest, he was no sooner confronted with her dewy presence than he confessed the impossibility of complete confession. To tell her what the missing letters were would be brazenly to tell her that he loved her, and she, looking at him so straight from her wide eyes, was still a deity to whom to own earthly love was to offer sacrilege.

He had told her, immediately and in the fewest words, of the theft of the interview. That done, he was at an abrupt termination.

She asked him, was he sure? There could be, he said, no doubt of it.

"Garcia," she said: "this is his work. I knew that man at the door wasn't a Frenchman."

"He was a Secret Service man," said Andy. He added no word of how that had been so recently confirmed.

"Yes, of course. Well, there isn't time and there isn't a chance of getting a fresh interview. They don't think you have a copy?"

"They cleaned out the whole place."

"But you might have carried one with you—or the notes."

"I used a pencil, and they could have seen pieces of the notes lying around in the grate."

"So they know they have it all, and they know, with this

offensive going on, we can't get another. We must get this one back."

"The French daren't send it now."

"Not"—she bent and patted Tac, curled on the floor before her—"not if they don't know that our censorship knows?"

"They'll be told."

"We mustn't cross that bridge till we come to it. The thing is to get back the manuscript."

"That's what I thought at first—but how?"

She picked up, from her sofa, his cap and began, abstractedly to pluck at it. He thought her strong fingers would tear the lining. Her brows puckered. "Give me a day to think about that."

"Garcia has it," said Andy: "I can't tell you—can't tell you how I know it, but I do. He has it in his rooms."

"You haven't been there?" she quickly asked.

"No, but I'm sure of it."

"You mustn't run that risk. He'd not want anything better than to catch you there and call you a thief."

"I know that; but"—Andy nodded a determined head; he drew resolution from her sublime practicality. "I'll get this somehow. Don't worry: leave it to me."

She smiled at him, but, for all her calm, she had, indeed, torn a bit of the lining from his cap. "Wait a day. Perhaps we can think of something. We're sure to."

This iteration brought back acutely the other danger. "But there—there are other things."

Her quickness followed close: "Other things stolen?"

"Yes. There were—were some letters."

"Letters to you?"

"No." All his blood was in his cheeks. "Letters I'd written and never posted—crazy letters."

She looked at him almost sharply. "Not—" There was a catch in her throat.—"Not about this muddle?"

"No. They—oh, I guess they were silly letters! I never really meant to post them."

He could not more plainly have told her that they were written to a woman. He had bowed his head; across her face there

was drawn the rapid knife-blade of pain. It would have been evident that a quality she had not before dreamed of owning was wounded. She looked at her hands lying in her lap—those hands which were in part so boyish—but when she looked up and met his recovered gaze, she was smiling.

“I suppose they wouldn’t hesitate to use them against you, but we must just get them back, too.”

“It isn’t so much that they’d be used against me,” said Andy: “they’ve got plenty against me without them; but”—his gaze fell again—“there’s—there’s *her*.”

“Oh!” Sylvia closed her eyes for a second. “Well,” she said as she reopened them, “nobody can be blamed for letters that are written *to her*.” She crushed the piece of cap-lining in her pink palm; she laughed, and there was in this laughter a sound—it was almost a hint of hardness—that made him gape at her. “I’ve been on the stage long enough to know that.”

Andy winced. “Don’t!” he pleaded. He also had his revelation.

Her answer was to consult her wrist-watch, rouse Tac and dismiss Andy with perfect serenity. “You mustn’t bother. Wait for a day. There is that much time. My life has made me resourceful: I’ll think of something. Now I must go to rehearsal, and you can’t see me on my way.” One bolt of tenderness touched her face; she put her hand on his shoulder: “You’re just a boy, Andy. It will all come out right, I’m sure.”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### PRESENTING SYLVIA RAEBURN IN A NEW RÔLE

GARCIA, in order to turn up the lamp, bent so low that the reviving light fell first on his altered face and only bit by bit, while his fingers fumbled at their task, illuminated the room and the other person in it.

His cheeks were flushed by a yellowish pink; the mottled skin, ordinarily tightly drawn over his cheek-bones, was now a little bloated. His lips hung loose, and there was an angry mark upon the point of his chin. Under the gaze of his protruding eyes a glow smoldered.

"Now," he said—there was a slight thickness in his speech, which disregarded the particles—"now we'll have real party."

The growing light showed his parlor: the center-table on which the lamp stood, and some American papers and a strong-bladed paper-cutter lay; a couple of easy chairs beside the comfortable coal-fire; a *chaise longue* near the bedroom door, standing ajar; two heavily curtained windows, between which rose a closed Breton writing desk, carved in high relief, and, finally, the door opening on the stairway, by which, with Tac beside her stood Sylvia Raeburn.

She was not the Sylvia that Andy knew. A wide-brimmed crimson hat shaded, but failed to hide a face as much changed, though by whatever means, as was her host's. When she threw back her ermine opera-cloak, her bust and shoulders of warm marble shone, in flowing curves and full roundness, above a dress that matched its hat and clung to a figure which might have been that of a woman of thirty. Her yellow hair had an alloyed luster, her brows seemed darker and thicker, her lashes longer. Her cheeks flamed, her laughing lips were as red as blood, and the hard brilliance of her eyes made their color almost indistinguishable.

"A real party!" she echoed, peeling off her long gloves, while a great red purse dangled from her right forearm. "I told you I'd let you know some time when I was free."

"Yes. Good girl. 'S a good dinner, too, wasn't?" He came toward her, closed the door, and began to help her with her wrap.

"I love Paillard's," she vowed. As a pampered cat stretches its legs under caresses, she leaned back her head while his hot hands, ostensibly busied with the satin lining of the opera-cloak, lingered over the still smoother skin of her firm shoulders.

"That all you love?" Holding the cloak wide with both hands, Garcia, from behind her, bent his smiling face to her face upturned.

She shook her yellow curls.

He brought his arms together, but they closed upon the cloak only. She had darted out of its folds and was laughing at him from across the table.

"Oh, what a man-in-a-hurry!" she taunted.

Garcia had, in fact, not drunk that evening so much as was usual with him—no more than he frequently bore from luncheon to the rue Ste. Anne without any hurt to his censoring of manuscripts save such as infuriated the correspondents—but the wine of her beauty, the sense that he was revenging Andy's blow, while they strengthened his resolution, weakened his body enough now to make cardinal what had been venal. His smile became grim. He lurched toward her. Instantly, Tac barred the way.

"*Halte!*" cried Sylvia.

Tac stood still.

"Damn that dog," Garcia grumbled. "Near fell over him."

"*Ici!*" she commanded, and was obeyed.

"Don't like me, the brute."

She was fondling the brute provokingly. On her knees, with one cheek against Tac's head, she gave the lieutenant a glimpse of her pouting mouth, her mocking eyes. "I don't believe *you* like *him!*" She pointed to the knife-like paper-cutter. "I believe you'd like to use that on him," she said.

Garcia's attempted chuckle was rather a grunt. "Me?" he answered. "Crazy 'bout him."

He unlocked and opened a closet that formed the upper part of the Breton desk, took out some bottles, a syphon and glasses, brought them to the table and then relocked the closet. The glasses had clinked dangerously as he carried them.

"Helluva country," he said. "Cold as pole, but can't get ice."

She appeared to enjoy the joke, and, when he had mixed two brandies-and-soda, raised her glass so that it touched his.

"To our better acquaintance," she said.

"Bottoms up!" he ordered, and she drank it, her bright eyes looking across the brim into his.

He poured another drink, and they sat down to it in the easy chairs beside the fire. Garcia prodded the coals with a poker; Sylvia, feline still, curled herself in the warmth of the resulting blaze, her crimson purse lying deep in her crimson lap. The light from the flames played over her crimson dress, her white bosom, her yellow hair; it played also over the lieutenant's uniform and woolly head; it played on Tac, lying between them.

"You can't guess when it was I first saw you in Paris," she presently said.

He looked up, lifted his glass from the floor and drained it. "I 'member time first saw you stage N'York."

"Oh, but you only met me once over there and that was in a crowd. You forgot all about me."

Above the last drops, he shook his head. "Never forgot," he said, into his glass.

"But guess when I first saw you in Paris."

"Dunno." He put down the glass and leaned toward her, his gaze fixed at her breast. "When was?"

"It was just after I got here, when I made my first visit to the provost-marshal's. I was getting my 'Y' worker's pass—the one I showed you at Paillard's to-night. You'd come out of your office and were standing in the hall near the doorway."



Garcia, leaning to the table, poured himself some more brandy-and-soda. "Have 'nother?"

She shook her head.

"Aw, c'on!"

"Well"—she held out her emptied glass—"just a little one: some soda with a little brandy in it."

"No"—Garcia, rising, took her wrist between the thumb and finger of his left hand—"not till you do some'n for."

"Something for you?"

"'S'what said."

Her mouth drooped. "What do you want me to do?"

"Off your hat." Garcia burst into loud laughter and released her wrist. "Off your hat an' stay a while!"

Without a word she raised her white arms, loosened the hat from the yellow glory of her hair and threw the crimson thing across the room to where, on the *chaise longue*, her cloak lay.

"There," she said, smiling once more. "Now, will you give me a drink?"

He shook his head. "Be good li'l girl: say, 'Please.'"

"Please, teacher!"

This time his chuckle was untrammelled. He poured a stiff drink and handed it to her. He put the syphon back upon the table, where it rested drunkenly on the paper-cutter's thick steel blade.

"Oh!" She made a great face over her dram. "That's not soda with a little brandy in it."

"What 't is?" He swayed before her.

"It's brandy with a little soda."

They both laughed. She put down her untouched glass and resumed her chair; he, very close beside her, leaned against the table, his glass in his hand. Thick though his speech was, his head was clear.

"Provost-marsh' office," he reflected. "Sure remember." He felt his wounded chin; he straightened up. "Kid with you," he said.

"A kid?" She couldn't recollect.

"Young know-it-all Brown."

"Oh, yes—of course."

She would have dismissed Andy with the lightest of gestures.

"Been runnin' around with him lots," he insisted.

"I have?"

"'S'what said."

"You asked me." Her full eyes could hide no secret! "I've always reported."

"No use overdoin' 't." He frowned. "Ain't stuck on him?"

"On Andy Brown?" Sylvia laughed at the idea. "He's just a nice boy."

"'S damn trouble-maker. Tol' you that."

"Yes," she agreed, "he's a trouble-maker; but trouble-makers are just the kind of people most women don't care about."

"Yes—" Garcia's brow darkened. "You were in 's rooms las' night."

She smiled her scorn of the insinuation, a scorn, it seemed, directed not so much at the implied event as at the mentioned partner in it.

"Of course I was," she said. "I just told you you asked me to keep an eye on him. Here was a chance. I was at the Théâtre Français when the air-raid came. I thought he was out of town."

"Find anythin'?"

"No. He came in too soon. I had to pretend to be asleep."

"Somebody else found," said Garcia slowly.

"I know. He's been to see me. He told me."

"Did he tell you"—the mark on the lieutenant's face burnt redder—"tell you he saw me to-day?"

"No. What did he say to you?"

"Nothin'. Scared him."

"You mean you got something?"

"Got interview we'll s'press." Garcia paused; he watched her carefully. "An' some letters."

"Well?" she asked, her eyes darkening.

"To a girl," said Garcia. "Didn' he tell you what girl?"

"No. I don't care what girl it was."

"Oh, don't you? Well, I know her. She's a peach."

Again he reflected. "My girl," he concluded.

She bit her lip. She had been thinking all the time, somehow, of a girl back home in Americus. "That goes well," she presently resumed, "after what you've been saying at dinner about all you thought of *me*."

A light broke on Garcia. "My *old* girl," he corrected. "Now why d'you say he's a nice boy?"

One of her slippered feet tapped the floor. Its buckle glistened in the firelight.

"He used to be that."

Garcia put down his glass. Placing an arm on the back of her chair, he leaned over her.

"Look here: musn't lose your head. He's just kid; can't do anythin' for a girl."

"He's just a kid," she reflected. She was looking at the leaping flames in the grate and at Tac, lying broad awake before them.

"Innocent kid," Garcia insisted. "Some women like 'em."

"Can you—" She gave him that provoking smile again.

—"Can you guess who it is *I* like?"

"Who?" He bent closer. "More'n one, I bet yo'."

"Well, one just now, anyhow."—Alas, poor Andy!

"Who 't is?"

"I won't tell."

His face nearly met hers. "Yes, will. Make you."

She pushed him merrily away.

"Not yet," she said.

Garcia recovered himself. "Can't do anythin' for a girl—he can't. No money, no pull. *I* can."

"Oh, don't let's talk about him. Andy Brown!" She laughed Andy away.

"But I want to know—"

"So do I." She faced him saucily. "You were talking about an 'old girl': I saw you with somebody on the boulevard a day or two ago."

Garcia squared his shoulders. "Nothin' to it."

"She was very pretty."

"Oh, pretty 'nough. Nothin' to it, though."

"Now, now!" A raised forefinger admonished him.

"Well," he said, "I tell you. Silly kind girl. Got crazy 'bout me. Not my fault. You're a woman: know how't is."

She nodded a pensive comprehension.

"But these French girls no idea time. No matter how much love you, no idea time. Never gave her 'couragement, but she'd always be hangin' 'round. Then saved her life yesterday 'n big gun smashed café, an' li'l devil didn't keep dinner date for las' night. Loves me, but no grat—gratitude an' abs'lutely no idea time."

"And so you're coming back to your liking for American girls?"

"Betcher boots." His breath broke quickly. "One of 'em."

Her hands were on the arms of the chair. He took that nearer him.

The touch of it was as heady as Russian-poppy wine. He gripped it.

"Sylv'!"

She rose toward him, and her purse, dislodged by this movement, fell, spewing its contents on the floor close to Tac's unbudging nose.

It was one of those trivial occurrences which, because they come from without, are ever an effective, though temporary, interruption to passion. Sylvia gave a little cry and stooped, under her admirer's descending lips, to recover her spilled treasures. Garcia, with an oath, joined her in the search. Tac snapped at him, and she had to order the dog away.

They seemed to have gathered everything together when Sylvia exclaimed:

"My card!"

"Your what?" asked Garcia.

"My worker's card: my 'Y' worker's card."

They searched for it, their groping hands frequently touching on the fur of the hearth-rug.

"Can't find it," said the impatient Garcia at last. "Not here."

"No" — she rose on her knees. "I've just remembered.

Don't you? I took it out to show you at dinner. It's at Paillard's. I laid it beside my coffee-cup and never put it back."

He argued with her, but she was quite certain now. When he insisted on a further search about the room, the results only confirmed her. She grew a little sullen and withdrew her hand whenever he took it.

Finally she stood upright. "I've simply got to have that card. I can't go anywhere outside of Paris without it."

"Oh, hell!" said Garcia, rising also. "Get you 'nother to-morrow."

"And let that one be found and turned in to the 'Y' authorities? What would *they* think?"

"Well, what goin' do 'bout it?"

She fronted him. "I'm sorry, but you'll have to get it for me—to-night before the restaurant closes at nine-thirty."

He protested, but she wouldn't listen. When he gave way, it was scarcely with a good grace.

"Then you come 'long."

"You're not very considerate." Something close to anger came into her eyes at his suggestion. "I've risked enough, coming in here once; I won't come in twice in the same night. No, you must go alone and let me wait. If you make me go with you, I won't come back. Hurry—I heard it strike nine a little while ago."

Muttering complaints, he got into his overcoat. He went to the desk, tried it, found it locked. Then he approached her. He drew very close, his arms open, the recaptured sour smile upon his lips.

"Kiss good-by," he commanded.

She met his gaze doubtingly. Tac was standing by her side.

"Will you hurry?"

"Course will. Want get back t'you."

"You—you haven't drunk too much to get there?"

"Drunk?" He straightened himself. "Cold sober. What-cher mean, drunk?"

"Oh, no; I know. I didn't mean that. Don't stop to argue: I believe you. Only do—*do*—get there before they close!"

"Get taxi boulevard." His eyes settled on her. "You wait."

"Of course I will."

"Not goin' give me slip?"

"If I do," she said seriously, "keep the card and tell the provost marshal not to issue me another."

His arms passed about her. "Then kiss good-by."

He lowered his face and she raised hers. Their gazes met; their lips drew closer. Where now was Ste. Jeanne d'Arc?

Suddenly she laughed. "No, not yet. If I kissed you, you'd never go." She put both her hands against his breast and pushed until she was free. "I'll keep that for a reward. When you give me the pass, I'll kiss you. Now, please go!"

## II

The door closed after him. She stood by the table, leaning lightly on it. She heard the street-door close.

She was changed instantly into a quick and frightened thing. But she was again the girl that Andy knew.

"Tac!" she whispered.

The dog wagged his tail.

Out of a pocket in her purse she drew a bit of cloth; it was the piece that she had torn from the lining of Andy's cap. She thrust it under Tac's pulsing nostrils. "*Cherche!*" she commanded, and restored the keepsake to its pocket.

The dog laid back his ears; his tail tightened low between his legs. Sniffing excitedly, he moved, with a silent quickness, about the room.

"*Vite!*" whispered Sylvia.

Minutes passed. His nose now down, now up, Tac hurried. He went to the hearth-rug, the tables, the chairs. He smelled of the *chaise longue*.

"*Vite, mon chien!*" pleaded Sylvia. "*Cherche—vite—vite!*"

He disappeared into the bedroom, but was out again before she could follow him. He paused at the carved Breton desk, but, when she came toward it, he darted away.

"Oh," she cried, "*vite—for God's sake, Tac—pour l'amour de Dieu!*"

He made a fresh circuit of the room. More minutes sped and more: a quarter of an hour.

Sylvia wrung her hands. Tac's pace lagged. Was he surrendering his quest?

Then he stopped before the carved Breton desk. He stood up on his hind legs and placed his forepaws against its closed lid. His tail flicked; he softly whimpered.

Sylvia ran to the desk: it was indeed locked. She scurried back to the table, overturned the syphon and seized the heavy paper-cutter that lay beneath it. With surprising strength, she plunged it into the crevice that ran between the lid and the body of the desk. She had chosen a point directly over the lock. The veins stood out on her boyish hands as she moved the blade backward and forward.

The lock was old and stiff, the wood was thick—and her time grew very short. She wasted five minutes.

Suddenly she went mad with desperation: she withdrew the knife, held it above her head and thence, shutting her eyes, drove it down blindly.

There was a splintering sound, and the knife fell to the floor. She looked: the knife had torn the wood from about the lock; the desk would open at a touch.

She flung it wide. Was there yet time for a search? There was, at all events, no need: there, before her, lay a pile of letters and, beneath them, a manuscript in Andy's hand.

Under the lamp on the table, she made sure of her find in another glance and put it into her breast. She took up the letters; she had not meant to look at them, but how, she asked herself, was she to know them for the right ones unless she did look at them? She would look; she did.

They were in the same hand as that which penned the manuscript.

They were addressed to her!

She staggered against the table, and Tac, his tail wagging with the rapid joy of pride, gave a quick lick to her unoccupied hand. She pressed the letters wildly to her lips. She thrust them into her breast, ran to the *chaise longue*, picked up and put on her hat, flung her cloak over her shoulders—

"Card wasn't there," said Garcia.—"*What in hell have you been up to?*"

## III

He stood in the open doorway, and realization of her duplicity sobered him. His lips writhed frightfully, and he leaped toward Sylvia.

She sprang behind the table.

He bent across it. His face had tightened; he was chalky white.

"Hand 'em over!" he commanded.

She looked at the door. She couldn't make it. Then she gave him gaze for gaze.

"I won't," she said.

"Then"—still bending over it, he edged round the table—"I'll take 'em, and, by the Lord God, I'll take *you*, too!"

"*Attaque!*" cried Sylvia.

Something brown shot over the table's edge and struck Garcia full upon the chest. With tremendous force it struck him—crashed with him to the floor—stood over him, and, as he lay supine, he looked up into Tac's opened muzzle.

"*Halte!*" commanded Sylvia. "*Bouge pas!*—If you move a hair's breadth," she calmly warned Garcia, "he will kill you."

Garcia answered with a curse, but he did not stir.

"I am going now," she concluded. "When I get to the street-door, I'll call him. You had better not try to overtake me while he lies between us."

## IV

At her appeal of "*Cordon,*" the invisible concierge snapped on the hall light as he opened for her the front door. The light fell full on her and on Tac, who at this instant joined her there.

The exit brought to pause, in the shadows across the street, somebody that had been about to call on Garcia. This person saw her, and saw the dog. He saw her, as she turned toward



the boulevards in search of a taxi-cab, pull something from her breast and put it to her lips.

He did not pursue his purpose. He slid into the shadows of the rue Mont Thabor. He was shaken by sudden sobs. He had recognized Sylvia coming out of Garcia's rooms by night and kissing a love-token.

He was Andy Brown.

## CHAPTER XIX

### HOW MISS HATTIE DISCOVERED A LITTLE, AND CHRISSLY LOST A GREAT DEAL

ALTHOUGH, "Over There," men began to tremble, "Back Home" continued, by and large, ignorantly and almost joyously confident. It was a sin to grumble; it would have been a crime to suspect. The whole country fasted with the enthusiasm of a new convert to a stern sect. It made a joke of freezing; lightless nights, meatless days and wheatless: the people observed them as one dons a decoration. Nothing was more wonderful than the rapidity with which the nation made itself at home in a totally strange environment. Just now a sale of war-bonds was approaching: men looked forward to it as if it were a fête. True, the enemy again neared the gates of Paris; but was not the American army about to fight? Washington sent forth magnificent descriptions of aeroplane production, of great guns in the making and of ammunition manufactured in Gargantuan quantities and with miraculous speed. The Administration talked in the vast figures that the native mind adores: we were ourselves, tremendous, magic, unconquerable. So was it in big cities and little towns, and so in Americus.

Meanwhile, Miss Hattie Lloyd was busy, and her grudge grew apace against the power of the daughter of a dentist who had once extracted the wrong tooth by mistake.

In her lonely home, she opened ancient chests-of-drawers, took out faded daguerreotypes and pictures of little boys that were now old men, and she read many yellowed letters. She was trying to remember something that she had forgotten.

She made a trolley-trip to Doncaster and visited the court-

house. When she came back, she went straight from the car to Lawyer Dickey's office.

"James," she said, "I've been looking up the title to that house Ralph Bolingbroke loaned to the Red Cross." She cocked her head. "There's something queer about it."

"Poof!" said the old lawyer. "How do you know how to look up a title?"

"I don't: I made the young man there do it for me. The deeds go up to Joe Tollens' time, and then there's a gap till Ralph got it." Miss Hattie gave herself a little hug. "Ralph's got a lot of things in this town, and umbrellas aren't all: has he got everything according to law?"

"Of course he has," Dickey sought to assure her. "He's not a robber."

"Well," Miss Hattie persisted, "he doesn't seem to have much to show for the way he got that house. I don't believe he has any right to it, and I believe Sarah knows it. I believe she knows *something* and just won't tell because she's got so much of the old Tollens pride in her. The young man in the court-house said it looked queer. It *is* queer; you've got to admit it is."

Mr. Dickey scratched his head. Reluctantly, he took up the telephone and called Ralph Bolingbroke's office at the factory: the lawyer had had a telephone installed in violation of his principles, and he used it on this occasion as one uses a necessary but unworthy tool.

"Ralph," he said into the transmitter, "about that house of yours that the Red Cross is using: how'd you get it?—What?—A bad debt?—Yes, I just want to satisfy a possible purchaser"—he winked shamefacedly at Miss Hattie—"who's in my office now.—Yes.—They did? The Tidds?—How did *they* get it?—Oh, I see: adverse possession. Thank you."

He hung up the receiver.

"There you are," he said in a voice that indicated fear lest the telephone should hear him. "The Bolingbrokes got the house for a bad debt from the Tidds, and the Tidds got it from Tollens through adverse possession."

Miss Hattie blinked rapidly. "What's that?"

"Possession against legal right." Mr. Dickey looked about him at the rows of calf-bound law-books. "It has to be hostile, continuous, exclusive, actual and visible."

"Does it?" said Miss Hattie. "Then what is it?"

"If you own a house and let a man live in it without paying rent—"

"In other words, if you're a fool," Miss Hattie suggested.

"—and if," continued Mr. Dickey, "he keeps telling people that it's his house, why, after a while, it is his."

"The Tidds did that to Joe Tollens!"

"Ralph says so."

"And he let them—Joe did?"

"That's what Ralph says."

"Well"—Miss Hattie rose—"I can almost believe it: it sounds just like Joe Tollens." She smoothed her black silk skirt. "Thank you, James."

"Don't mention it," said the lawyer.

"How long does the person have to live in the house?"

"To acquire it by adverse possession? Twenty years."

"Thank you," said Miss Hattie again, and stalked out of the office.

## II

Mr. Dickey was still flurried by this visit when, next morning, Colonel Eskessen dropped in.

"I never saw such a woman as Hattie Lloyd," the lawyer complained. "She keeps on questioning Ralph Bolingbroke's right to the old Tidd house—and after all the splendid Red Cross work Mrs. Ralph's done." He told his friend all about it.

"Is the place worth much?" asked the colonel, reflectively patting his poll.

"There's been an offer of ten thousand as it stands."

"Well, Miss Hattie talks a lot, but she generally has something to go on."

"Nonsense, Kai!" Mr. Dickey swore softly.

"Let's see," the colonel imperturbably ruminated: "Sarah Brown was born the same year as my cousin Kate's boy, George. That'd make her—. Yes, George'd be forty now, if

he'd lived; Kate spoke of it in a letter I got from her last week. And Joe Tollens lived in the Tidd house when his father died. When did old man Tollens die, Jim?"

"I don't care when he died."

"I think he died in '79 or '80. Then if Joe left the place to go to Mt. Horeb, he must have done it inside of two years, for an estate's got to be settled within two years, hasn't it? That would make it— Why, Jim"—the colonel's mild eyes widened—"allowing I'm a year out of the way, and calculating the Tidds moved in right off, they couldn't have been there over nineteen years."

The lawyer stood up; he began to pace the room. The two men racked their memories, recalled dates, argued; but the colonel won his argument.

"Thunder!" said Mr. Dickey. "I don't know what to do. I wish— Why can't Hattie Lloyd let well enough alone? Of course, Ralph'll do the right thing—no question about that: Ralph'll do the right thing."

When Blunston passed, they called him in as a friend of Sarah's. He heard the well-meaning pair in silence. Only when, with an appeal for his advice, the lawyer concluded, did Blunston offer a suggestion; but what he then said was effective:

"Why worry Bolingbroke? You told me Miss Hattie thinks Sarah knows all about. . . . If she'd wanted anything done, it seems to me she would have done it long ago, or else. . . . In short, it's her affair. . . . It's not yours, it's not mine. I really don't see. . . ."

Put that way, it was not any more visible to Mr. Dickey or Colonel Eskessen.

### III

To an Americus occupied with such matters Chrissy returned from France. Notification that he was to go seemed scarce to have reached the hospital before the form of his release followed. His leave would be short, and most of it would be passed as a sort of war-exhibit, carried about from one Liberty Loan meeting to another under orders from the

committee charged with raising Doncaster County's quota; but it meant home, or a glimpse of home, and he started on the journey without another chance to see Andy and with no awakening of the stunned memory from which the shock of an exploding shell had blown Léonie's image. From Philadelphia he sent two telegrams announcing his approach: one was addressed, in accord with instructions, to Colonel Essessen, the only member of the Loan Committee that lived in Americus; the other Chrissly knew would amaze his father by being conveyed to him from the telephone nearest the Shuman farm, a matter of eight miles.

The evening train was slow, and Chrissly grew restless long before it entered the Americus yards. He had been worrying because of the sense of something gone from his life, something nameless, yet of paramount import; worrying over the speeches that he would, he was told, be expected to make—for much of his rusticity had returned when the consciousness of Léonie left him—worrying because, though sure that his country would somehow grope its way to victory in the end, he was aware of much that was at present ill, and vaguely apprehensive of immediate consequences. He began to wander up and down the aisle of the dim smoking-car; he fell into desultory conversation with an elderly traveling salesman; but his walk only made him more restless, and he was appalled to find that he had nothing which appeared to interest the blood-thirsty drummer when that person, discovering the fact of his foreign service, assailed him with questions about the war.

"What's it like?" echoed Chrissly. "Oh, how do *I* know? It's wet, just, an' noisy—an' it's org cold."

"But the killin'?" urged the salesman. "Didn't you do for a couple of Dutch?"

"Huh? I— Why, what's all the noise still?" The train was nearing the station at last. Chrissly escaped his persecutor by throwing up a window and letting in a blast of whistles and a ringing of many bells. "They must be a fire or somesing."

The train stopped. Station and street were crowded. The

noise was deafening; there were torches and flags and cheering people and a band.

"Young fellow," said the drummer, "I guess *you're* the fire!"

## IV

They bundled him out and hugged him and huzzawed for him—hundreds of them, people he had known only to bow to across his father's market-stall and more people that he did not know at all. With that strange sense of loss adding to this sense of a new Chrissy in a new Americus, he was hustled through a hand-shaking, back-slapping throng and, almost at once, found himself following a fresh silk flag and the Silver Cornet Band over Second Street and up brilliantly lighted and yellingly lined Elm Avenue at the head of a parade composed of the Elks, the Eagles, the Moose and the Owls, of the local platoon of State Militia, factory-workers, school-children and the Girls' Patriotic League, in the glare of red lights and the splutter of Roman-candles and under the everywhere evident marshalship of "Babe" Campbell in full uniform.

"So you're back, Chris Shuman," some one in the rank behind him called above the clamor. "You must want to hear all the news and things that's happened in Americus since you went to France."

Chrissy suddenly found himself embraced by a disproportionately tall person, who seemed to have been his childhood's bosom friend, yet whom he recognized as Mr. Bolingbroke, head of the town's umbrella-factory, who had never before exchanged with him any phrases save those of trade. Ralph, with genial condescension, took up the talk: "The old place keeps going right along," he said.

Chrissy grinned and nodded. He couldn't stop grinning, and he couldn't talk.

"We're mighty glad to have you," said Ralph—"migh-ty glad, Mr. Shuman. We had only an hour's warning, but I got up the parade without the least trouble in the world."

The crowd along the street kept up a continuous roar.

"To hell with the Germans!" called some of the crowd; it struck Chrissly that this hatred of the enemy was a little too vocal. But they *were* glad to see him; there was no mistaking that! Every now and then a man jumped forward and shook his hand and jumped back again; once, somebody plucked at his khaki overcoat and he turned in time to see the flutter of a disappearing skirt and to wonder if it was Minnie's. There was an ache in his head—an ache, as it were, in his memory—but, though he felt very foolish, he felt very proud; he had never felt so proud before: he hoped his father and mother had got their telegram in time to be here.

"Gee," said Chrissly—the grin was fixed on his face; he was sure it would never go away—"gee, but this here's a good town!"

They swept him up the Opera House steps; they jostled around him and cheered, and the band played *The Star-Spangled Banner* and all the people took their hats off and Chrissly, between the chief burgess and Ralph Bolingbroke, stood at salute above the crowd.

"Speech!" cried two or three persons, and at once everybody was crying: "Speech!"

Chrissly—but he was grinning still—looked appealingly at Ralph.

"Go on, talk to 'em," said Ralph.

"Oh, no," Chrissly stammered. "I can't."

"Sure you can," Ralph insisted: "you've got to."

He himself stepped forward and introduced Chrissly: "The first hero of Americus to come home from the war. He left us a farm-boy; he returns a veteran soldier. Three cheers for Chrissly Shuman, who's going to tell you how he killed his share of the Huns."

They all wanted to hear about killing; they did not want to hear about anything else. With a high-pitched, nervous voice, Chrissly tried to tell them of the training-camp, but stuttered and stumbled over it: he was interrupted by cries for horrors. He endeavored to talk of the dreariness and filth of the trenches, but no Roman amphitheater ever so demanded blood.



He vocally fumbled; he stopped. Then, suddenly, it came to him: they had paid him with their welcome; he must give them what they asked. He was giving it before he had any idea how the adventure would turn out:

“... my ozzer two pals dead there aside o’ me, so’s I was the only one alive still, an’ them sree Germans comin’ right at me. The first of ’em, him I gave the last cartridge I had left yet, an’ the next one I let him have my bay’net; an’ then I yanked it out an’ give the sird fellow the butt just as the second he was goin’ to stick me!”

He reached the unexpected climax at exactly the moment when he saw his father’s face approaching him by movements of the burly paternal shoulders through the crowd. If he had seen it a second earlier, he would have been unable to finish; but time was kind, and the renewed cheers of the crowd saved him.

## V

“Chrissly,” said his father, as they drove homeward, “we gotta hurry some. It’s Saturday to-morrow, an’ you’re to help me tend market.”

“Yes, pap,” said Chrissly.

“An’ Chrissly,” said his father—nor did he ever again refer to the ovation of Americus—“you’re a good boy—a *real* good boy. ’F I was you, Chrissly, I wouldn’t lie no more about killin’ sree Germans wis one gun.”

## VI

When, an hour later, he had passed up the familiar path and flung himself upon the ample bosom of the mother silhouetted in the lamplit doorway, the tears that rained upon his face were not all her tears: glad as he had been to start for home, he had not guessed how good it would be to arrive there. He returned kiss for kiss; he walked about the house, touching the remembered furniture to make certain of its reality; he even entered the parlor, generally sacred to weddings and funerals, and sat on one of its stiff horsehair-cushioned

chairs and vowed that it was good to rest on something soft again. He ate hugely of the huge supper that was waiting him; he babbled Pennsylvania Dutch as if he had never known another idiom, and when at last he tumbled into bed—into a high feather-bed—he was prepared to nurse there but two sensations: delight in homecoming and relief that his pacifistic parents avoided the subject of war.

Yet there was something lacking. The ache in his head throbbed for deliverance. Unless it was Minnie, he could think of nothing that he did not have. He would see Minnie on the morrow. . . .

But was it Minnie?

Throughout the voyage across, he had been too anxious for home to analyze his trouble. Now he could not analyze it. Often, as a boy, he had come back from market with the sense that he had forgotten some commission that should have been executed in Americus, but the nature of which it was impossible to recall. This was like that; but it was more intensified. . . .

He tried to go over all that had happened to him since his arrival in France, and found that it was everywhere hazy. Among the people he had seen there, no individual was distinct. There was some individual that he wanted to remember: some one that had either hurt him very much or been very kind to him. Who was it, and why should this person be important?

Chrissly stretched out his arms and legs in the soft luxury of the bed. He had not slept in a real bed since leaving home.

That person—it must be Minnie. . . .

Chrissly fell asleep.

## VII

That was in Pennsylvania. In the black attic-room of a village-tavern in Meurthe-et-Moselle, a French girl was lying rigid on her narrow mattress and staring into the darkness above her—staring hard, as if it were possible to pierce it and to find, beyond it, the face of some one swallowed by the night of war.

## CHAPTER XX

### BUT WHAT ABOUT ANDY?

"Good God!" said McGregor.

Garcia had been saying a great deal—not the details of how Andy's papers had been secured or of how, once secured, they were lost—but enough to justify the contractor, who never cared for anything save results, in his ejaculation.

"Good God!" said McGregor again.

He stood behind one of his living-room's gilt chairs, and his pudgy hands twisted its back until Garcia, pale and nervous before him, thought the frail woodwork would snap.

"You told me not to pull the rough stuff," said Garcia.

"And what do you call what you did pull?" McGregor demanded. "You rob his rooms—"

"The censorship wanted to delay that interview till it was a dead one."

"I don't care a damn about the censorship; all I'm interested in's planes, and you know it."

"I thought it'd be a good thing to get something on him."

"And what did you get? A few love-letters that he never sent!"

Garcia raised malicious eyes. "He had that woman up there. We found that out."

"In an air-raid. You said so yourself."

"Nobody'd believe she went there for that. I don't."

"You wouldn't.—Well, I do. I may have my doubts about her, but I haven't got any about him. He's a clean straight boy. Anybody with any sense'd know you couldn't get anything of that kind on him. All I wanted was to get him where he couldn't hurt my aeroplane business: that's why I fixed it so's he could be given a commission. And how did

you go about *that* part of the job? Did you play up to his patriotism? You did not! You offered him a lieutenancy, or a captaincy, or whatever it was, the way I'd offer a hundred-dollar bill to a town councilman that I wanted to vote for a franchise! I hope he knocked you down."

Garcia turned away.

"Come back here," ordered McGregor. "Look up." And when he had been reluctantly obeyed: "You've spilled the beans. I can't make another move against Brown—we've lost every chance of him. But I can do something for you: I can pay you for your raw work. I said I'd do it—I warned you—and now I'm going to make good." Gripping the chair with both hands, the contractor leaned across it; his little eyes shone ominously above bags of fat turned a dull brown. "You're going back to line-work, Garcia. I'll fix that before luncheon!"

Rage and terror pulled at the lieutenant's lips. "If you try that—"

"You won't do anything," McGregor interrupted. "You can't touch me, but I could send you to Leavenworth on any one of a dozen counts. Instead of that, I'm only going to have you sent to the front; I'm only going to give you a chance to make a man of yourself."

Terror won Garcia. His mouth twitched; tears came into his eyes.

"Mr. McGregor, please! You know I'm no soldier; you know I—"

"Get out of here!" said McGregor.

"But, Mr. McGregor—"

The contractor raised a short arm; his pointing finger indicated the door. "Get out!"

Garcia knew that his cause was lost. He stumbled away. With his hand, however, on the knob, he turned to McGregor a face black with spite.

"You're crazy over that kid," he said. "I believe you think more about him than you do about your contracts. Well, you needn't bank on getting him out of trouble. You've started something you can't stop. I've got Brown framed."

## II

McGregor, when the door had closed, wrote a note and sent it by messenger to Andy's rooms: he asked Andy to come at once to see him. Within the hour, he had his answer:

"DEAR MR. MCGREGOR—Thank you, but I'd rather not. We don't think alike, so what's the use of talking? And, besides, I don't want to see anybody just now.

"Yours truly,  
"A. MCK. BROWN."

## III

Andy was living in a darkened world, darkly. He was living in a Paris the mood of which was but as the shadow of his own cast tremendously against the sky. The Germans were at the gates, the Allies were weakening; America had failed the Allies, and Sylvia had failed his ideal.

On the day that he heard from McGregor, he heard from her. She, too, asked him to come to see her, and to her also he sent a refusal. All dreams were false.

There are few entries in his note-book for this time, but of these a few are worth transcription:

"Friday	9	P. M.	Air-raid. Three hours.
"Saturday	7:30	A. M.	Bombardment by big gun, continued till 4 P. M.
	9:30	P. M.	Air-raid.
"Sunday	7	A. M.	Big gun again. Till 3:30.
"Monday	1	A. M.	Air-raid.
	6	A. M.	Big gunning.

*"I don't care!"*

It was fitting that she should fail just when democracy was failing; they had been intertwined in all his visions; they were inseparable. He tried to think of neither, and thought of nothing else.

The whole world had changed; the world of yesterday was dead. It had been murdered and, with its life-blood, his own

life-blood, the life-blood of all that mattered in him, had flown into the street and dried there, a clotted thing, the food of hideous flies. Proved impotent at crisis—impotent or unwilling—the entire American effort had turned to a cynical joke, and she who had symbolized it—she, too, was a thing for laughter.

"If any one calls for me," he instructed the concierge, "say that I have gone to the American camp. I don't want to see anybody."

"Not," asked Mme. Lafon—"not anybody?"

"Nobody."

"But if"—the concierge smiled—"if somebody called like the pretty mademoiselle that monsieur found in his room some evenings since—"

"Her especially," said Andy. But he did not expect her.

That very evening, on his return home from a dismal dinner with Evans, Mme. Lafon said Sylvia had been to the house and asked for him.

"What did you tell her?"

Madame shrugged. "What would you? What monsieur told me to tell, my faith!"

(There was a snake in his heart. "Don't see her," it whispered. "She is trying to cozen you again. You have missed her: let her go.")

#### IV

The neighbors watched every clear sunset with the certainty of a nocturnal attack. The sirens would utter their terrifying, long drawn out shrieks, and the population would make for its cellars.

By day, the long-distance gun—"Bertha," they called it—made the streets almost as uncomfortable as the air-raids made them by night. A restaurant was blown to bits; every twenty-four hours, people were killed; on Good Friday came the destruction of St. Gervais, when the service of a congregation already in black was interrupted forever. The husband leaving home for work in the morning might never return, or, returning, find destruction awaiting him. The gun fired

with disquieting irregularity, and presently there were long lines of prospective travelers before the booking-offices of the railway-stations: Evans declared that eight hundred thousand persons had left the city.

The air was electric. The communiqués were twenty-four hours late: what was happening out there in the world beyond?

Drivers of camions that passed through the suburbs, and engineers of trains that transported troops, told their friends of things they had seen with their own eyes and of rumors they heard, and always believed, from those of the military with whom they came in contact: the stories passed from lip to lip like prairie-fire. Andy, listlessly visiting the government buildings, saw messengers come and go at all hours, dashing up in motor-cars that had darted through the streets at breakneck speed; telephone-receivers were never on their hooks; telegraph-instruments clicked incessantly; day and night, many of the officials remained in their offices.

Often he would sit long in his darkened rooms, looking out upon the shadowy gardens where the fountain played. He would hear other lodgers return home, climb the complaining stairs, shut their heavy doors. He would hear the night-rounds of the house and the occasional footsteps of some belated wayfarer passing along one of the paved *galéries* below. But he would not budge for an air-raid: dawn would find him at the window.

It was there that he had found her asleep. This room had been alight with her presence; she had curled her delicate body in this very chair. . . .

("You fool!" whispered the snake in his heart. "You small-town fool!")

His faith was shattered. He saw a diabolic world to return Lazarus to which had been a cruelty. When he thought at all of Garcia, he thirsted for a Thystan vengeance.

There was the moment when Andy definitely learned that the German army had broken through the line at the point

of juncture between the English and the French; the five days when Gough's British Fifth Army fell back and back until disaster seemed inevitable; the hour when, from the highest quarters, the word was whispered that the road to Paris lay open. Andy was walking homeward on that evening with the knowledge that the French reserves would not be concentrated for action before Sunday and that the outnumbered British might not be able to hold longer than Saturday night.

The Germans were at the gate.

Where was the "fighting army" promised by America?

Where was Jeanne d'Arc?

## VI

To the French, an American had to present himself in apologetic mood, had to try always to explain the obviously inexcusable. The ordinary Parisian did not make distinction among the newer uniforms, mistook Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. workers in Paris for United States soldiers enjoying themselves at the capital while Frenchmen died in the trenches. The discontented shook their fists and expressed ugly opinions of all persons "too proud to fight." Dark streets were not always safe for Americans.

There have been few days of such suspense. Even the uninformed came to know that something impended. The boulevard crowds were smaller than usual, and more restless. People gathered in little knots and spoke in undertones. Like every other accessible citizen of his country, Andy was again and again appealed to:

"Will not they let your army fight at last? Surely, they will let it fight now!"

## VII

Evans at last peremptorily bundled Andy away. The great good-natured man saw that something was eating out the lad's heart and decided for a change of moral atmosphere.



"Go down to Brest and see our navy," he commanded. "They know how to do things right."

He got Andy a pass through the naval attaché at the Embassy and shipped his patient across France, and Andy, for a time, plucked up some heart when he observed the splendid liaison maintained at the old port and saw something of the efficient patrol and convoy system operating from there.

Yet even here he found, soon, traces of the fatal blight. Sitting in the café of the Hotel Continental, a naval officer told him:

"This is a perfect harbor; it's the only natural harbor on the Atlantic coast of Europe, and it is splendidly defended. Now that we're beginning to use it, the transports can make their round-trips often in less than three weeks, whereas they used to take a hundred days. The only trouble's the poor railroad facilities."

Andy remembered the enormous railway-yards that he had seen building at Bordeaux. He spoke of them.

"That's just it," said the officer. "The army staff saw the makings of a good railroad center at Bordeaux and picked it for our chief port without thinking that when you come to choose a port it might be a good thing to consult somebody that knows something about water. Bordeaux's a hundred miles farther east than Brest; it's up a river that anybody can mine, it's across a sandbar that nobody can dredge, and it's got a tide that runs six or seven miles an hour. One of our transports got up there on the highest tide of the month and then had to wait for the next month's highest tide before it could get down."

A desperate official proved to Andy the army staff's railway failure at Brest. He took his guest over three miles of docks that resembled a house into which a vast family had but just moved. From one end of the place to the other ran almost uninterrupted ramparts, fifteen and twenty feet high, piled with material that the navy had delivered, but that the army's transportation chiefs could not remove. Mail-bags, motor-cars and wagon-parts lay there, and had, some of them, lain there for months. Food rotted before one's eyes. Here

was a group of expensive tractors pronounced impractical in France; there was a half-shipload of useless coffins, sent over empty, when there was so much need of space; a half-cargo of clothespins was heaped beside them. Worthless and valuable, the entire conglomeration was tossed together, still a day's journey from its destination, and fated, it seemed, never to move again.

"The other day," said the official, "we had a cargo come in with sugar and iron-rails. Some contractor'd packed the rails on top of the sugar; they'd busted through and ruined everything under them. The stevedores just had to throw that sugar into the harbor—seventy thousand pounds. And only yesterday there were forty tons of beef on a ship that hadn't remembered to install a refrigerating-plant: we tossed the lot overboard."

An energetic Y. M. C. A. secretary carried Andy out to barracks to speak to soldiers newly arrived. He stood on a low stage at the end of a vast tunnel-like hut, and the secretary had the soldiers sing for him.

"While you are sleeping,  
Your France is weeping:  
Wake from your dreams, Maid of France!"

They sang slowly, giving full weight to every word and conferring a true dignity on what they sang.

"Her heart is bleeding:  
Are you unheeding?  
Come with the flame in your glance!"

He saw them as a sea of faces upraised to his. The secretary had been saying that Andy knew this war and would tell them of the high battle in which they were soon to bear arms.

"Through the gates of heaven, with your sword in hand,  
Come, your legions to command!"

A sea of boys' faces—a sea of the faces of boys clean, eager, earnest, idealistic—

They swung into the refrain:

“Joan of Arc! Joan of Arc!  
Do your eyes, from the skies, see the foe?  
Don't you see the drooping Fleur-de-lis?  
Can't you hear the tears of Normandy?  
Joan of Arc! Joan of Arc!  
Let your spirit lead us through!  
Come, lead your France to victory:  
Joan of Arc, they are calling you!”

Andy ran away. He took the evening train for Paris. What he needed was not a change of moral atmosphere, but a self-vindication.

#### VIII

Quite a heap of papers was piled on the desk in his work-room when he returned to it. There was a letter from his mother, between whose always reserved lines he read a growing anxiety lest all should not be well with him, and another letter from Blunston, which would have been cheering in any other circumstances, since it replied in sturdy tone to Andy's memorandum of camp-conditions and said that the articles now bearing Andy's name were winning him a newspaper-reputation. A note scribbled by the conscientious Mme. Lafon said that the accompanying package had been left by an unknown messenger: the package was addressed in typewriting and contained everything that had been stolen from his rooms.

Andy promptly enclosed, without revision, the recovered interview in a fresh envelope and addressed it, with a formal apology for delay, to the French official who, Sylvia had told him, was to have it verified and dispatched. His letters to Sylvia he burned in the grate.

He was puzzled about these and the interview until he had read two other letters that were on his table and had been at the bottom of the pile. They were unstamped and bore superscriptions showing that they came from the American Staff.

His first glance at their coverings had led him to believe them only a pair of the many circulars of fresh instructions sent to correspondents, but when he had read them, Andy said:

"Of course they sent the other things back. They don't need them now."

For the letters contained Garcia's revenge. The first one ran:

"... In several American newspapers there has been published an article, which it is learned you wrote, though you did not sign it with your own name, criticizing the Press-Division, calling it 'the big joke' and 'one of the horrors of war' and which was not previously submitted by you for censorship in accordance with the term of the agreement. . . .

"... You have been suspended from privileges as a visiting correspondent with the American Forces in France. You are also hereby notified that a cable has been sent to the Secretary of War recommending that your bond as an accredited correspondent be forfeited regardless of the fact that you surrendered your credentials at a date now sometime past. . . ."

Andy folded this letter carefully and put it back on the desk. His hand shook a little as he did so, and the tremor increased as he read the second communication:

"... On January 31st, a memorandum, signed by an officer who states he was at the railroad station when the incident occurred, was submitted to the Chief of the Intelligence Section, Line of Communications, the memorandum reading as follows:

"1. A newspaper correspondent by the name of Brown was passing through Chaumont from Neufchâteau on January 18th. At the station, while waiting for the evening-train, which was several hours late, he made imprudent statements. He charged England with being beaten and ready to quit, he spoke very discouragingly of the French, he criticized the U. S. Army, besides giving away military information which he had obtained regarding the entry of the 1st Division into the trenches, and similar pieces of military information.

"2. His first name is Andrew. He was dressed in an

American officer's uniform, without officers' insignia, but with a correspondent's brassard. He was clean-shaven, red-haired and freckled.'

". . . No doubt your application to visit the British Front was denied owing to the statements you are alleged to have made in the memorandum quoted above.

"The report, when received here, would have resulted in an investigation with a view to recalling your credentials as an accredited or visiting correspondent, but coincident with its receipt information was received that you had already violated your signed agreement as an accredited correspondent by sending home for publication matter regarding our forces in France which had not been submitted to our censorship. . . ."

The grossness of these lies—Andy cynically remembered his swathings of sweaters and trench-coat, which concealed the brassard on his arm—the falsity apparent on their face, the reason why theft had followed their setting in action, or why bribery had, still later, been attempted—all that mattered nothing. Garcia had kept his word: Andy was "framed."

Scarcely able to see the paper on which he wrote, he sat down to answer his mother's letter. It was his day to write to her, and he must not let it pass.

"Dearest Mother," he wrote, "somehow, your last letter makes me think you are worrying about me. You mustn't worry. There is no danger in this part of the city from the long-range gun that you've of course read about, and our cellars are air-raid-proof. Things are extremely interesting, and I am safe and well and happy. . . ."

## CHAPTER XXI

### RECORDING TWO HIGHLY EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

WHATEVER might be said of Andy and his mother, Minnie Taylor's folks were not the sort of folks to write letters for no better reason than that none had been written for some time, and because of this highly practical attitude, Chrissly did not see his Ghismonda nearly so soon as he hoped. Minnie was visiting a cousin in Sunbury. She had stayed longer than she had planned to stay and, knowing nothing of Chrissly's return, enjoyed herself until the end of her visit. By the day when she came back to Americus, Chrissly's visit was also nearing its end, and he was soon to start on his Liberty Bond tour, from which, without again reaching home, he would set out for France.

Minnie's mother mentioned his presence when she walked up from the station with her daughter; her daughter immediately flew into a rage with her for another cause. It being evident that Chrissly was a town-hero, Minnie, the next morning, sauntered marketward. Although the family basket swayed from one plump arm, she wore her newest and shiniest short-skirt frock; her blonde hair was fastened by large pins that a Sunbury admirer, who gave them to her, had assured her were real tortoise-shell, and her pink cheeks had never been pinker, her china-blue eyes so blue. Chrissly was in uniform, but he stood behind the food-laden stall, helping his parents, almost as if he had never left off helping them. Minnie wormed her way through the crowd and then, as she caught his glance, started: she would have said that she registered amazement.

"Why, Chrissly!"—He was afraid she was going to break down.—"Were you wounded? How on earth did you get here? When did you come back?"

He blushed and, a sidelong glance telling him that his par-

ents were busy trading, stammered his explanations. He was so much his old self that she momentarily lacked interest, but she regained it when she saw how other people were regarding her and how proudly they regarded him. Then, as he stumbled on, she noted two new things about him—new and somewhat uncomfortable: he carried himself with a straightness that repudiated early memories of the plow, with movements that had none of the remembered uncertainties of other days, and his gaze on her face—this was the other thing, a thing, she felt, only fortuitously accompanying the former—was intent, questioning, a little puzzled.

She asked about his wounds, and when she found that they were quite cured, she reached across the stall and twisted one of the bronze buttons of his blouse.

"Can't you"—she lowered her modest eyes to the pile of sausages that lay between them—"can't you get a while to see your old friends, Chrissly?"

Chrissly burned with delight, but his gaze still questioned her. "I want to, lots."

"After market?" She gave him her smile.

"A' right. Pap's got some sings to buy: I'll have 'most an hour."

"You come up to our house."

He had never before been invited there. He should have been overwhelmed, but he seemed only the more puzzled.

"Sanks," he said.

Minnie recovered her poise. "I'll be pleased to see you," said she. "And I'd like three pounds of this smoked sausage, please."

## II

One did not pass through the chilling formality of a hallway to attain the Taylors' parlor, for the street-door opened directly into that apartment; but any want of rigidity in the matter of approach had its compensation in the glory of arrival. The Taylor parlor was a place for a great many things, and they all had the air at once of being new to it and of meaning never to be used or moved a hairbreadth from their re-

spective positions. There was a green and yellow rug on the floor as fresh as when it had hung in the show-window of a Doncaster instalment-house; there was much yellow wood-work and a brass chandelier apparently polished to an alarming degree of thinness. The ornate mantelpiece was covered by a crimson lambrequin that moved only composedly in the draughts of hot air from the open heater below it and that bore so many vases and plaques that it looked like the china-counter in the Racket Store. There were also some blue-plush chairs, and there was an orange-covered sofa on which Minnie dimplingly bade her soldier sit beside her.

"Now," she said, after explaining how it was that she had not seen him days ago, "we'll have a regular old-fashioned talk." She had received him at the door with a stiff-armed handshake that would have stopped a closer greeting on his part, had the perplexed young man contemplated any; but ensconced on the sofa she assumed a kinder tone. "I'm just dying to hear all about the war."

"Aw, no," said Chrissly, smiling down at her: she was a very pretty girl.

"Yes, I am. And you needn't be afraid of any one butting in, because my mother's gone to Doncaster in the Froenfields' automobile." Mrs. Taylor had been banished to the kitchen fifteen minutes before, but the motor-trip was planned for that afternoon, and Minnie did not see why a matter of three or four hours should rob her of the expedition's glamour. "I'm crazy to hear about the war." She fingered that blouse-button again.

"If you pull them-there off," Chrissly cautioned her, "I'll get a call-down next inspection still." He drew an inch away.

"How many Germans did you kill?" asked Minnie.

Chrissly, who felt excessively out of place on the stiff upholstered sofa, needed but this question to bring his embarrassment to the limit of endurance.

"Aw," he said, rubbing his red hands together, "don't let's talk about that none." What was lacking? What was it that he had forgotten? The ache in his head had never left him; now it was acute.



"We've had all sorts of times back here," she said: "we've had a whole lot of Red Cross dances, and—oh, we had a sort of regular epidemic of typhoid."

The statements about Americus evinced much more interest than her question about France. With some relief, but not entirely with relief, he realized that her preliminary urgings were mere politeness, that here was only another person possessed by a deeper interest in domestic affairs than in affairs foreign; Minnie did not really want to hear about the war at all; she did not want to hear about anything: she wanted to talk.

She did talk. She talked with dancing dimples that gave place to smiles sunny and not infrequently interrupted by the silver notes of teeth-displaying laughter. She told of the typhoid epidemic, and particularly of her part in it: how she had been one of a corps of volunteer nurses, who went about—"and in real uniforms"—to do nursing among the poor of Americus. Minnie said how she thought she had bathed fifty people, men, women and children, washed dishes and scrubbed floors.

"I never thought any places could be so dirty," Minnie declared.

Chrissly said nothing. He merely kept a questioning attention that was for her face rather than her words.

"Some of the regular nurses thought they knew it all, and some of the doctors were horrid—pretended they were smarter than the Red Cross nursing-book. They're awfully old-fashioned—the doctors in this town, I mean. The book said to bathe them and keep the windows open—bathe the sick people, of course—and Doctor Patrick scolded us because we did it!"

She *was* pretty. He admitted as much, but he admitted it with the generous ease of a man whose affections were engaged elsewhere. What was it that he had forgotten? He thought he would go mad if he did not remember.

One thing he realized clearly: past months had separated him from Minnie by countless miles. To this girl in her guarded little town, the war was a good deal like what an

earthquake might be in Honduras, where one or two persons she had known happened to be. She had not had the chance to go over there as had gone to hard and dangerous work some of the devoted women that he saw in France, and so the great struggle was less of a present world-horror than a local annoyance for her, here and there upsetting the normally merry progress of her life. Why, she talked as if she thought that her amateur nursing was war-work!

No, Minnie was not that which he had lost, though, when he was in the hospital in France, it was of her he had thought so much. But since not Minnie—what?

She was clicking on. If she wanted to impress him, she wanted just as sincerely to entertain him, and she never doubted that hers was the certain way. Now her subject was a new "social club" that some of the boys, home on leave from the cantonments, were planning to establish after the war. It would be a real club with a whole house of its own, and very select. She thought they might get the Tidd house when the Red Cross was through with it, and she told him her idea of how it could be remodeled. On a rainy afternoon when nobody else would be there, Mrs. Ralph had motored her to the Doncaster country-club; since which memorable visit, Minnie was her friends' authority on such matters.

She thought she would ask Mrs. Ralph what the Tidd house would rent for. She would put the question after next Friday's meeting of the pneumonia-jacket class. Then she would tell Chrissy the answer at Saturday's market.

It was only through this chance chatter that she learned the date of his departure:

"I won't be here still, the back-end of the week," said Chrissy.

Minnie stopped short. "Why—when—when are you going away?"

"Day after to-morrow." Chrissy said it as if he were talking of a trip to Doncaster.

"Not to France?"

"I go 'round an' 'round the country like, to these here Lib-

erty Bond meetin's. But I don't git back here no more 'fore I sail."

Minnie paled a little, and her pout arose from genuine feeling. "I thought of course you'd stay a while."

"I *have* stayed, Minnie. I can't stick around here doin' nussing all the time."

"I hate the old war!" Minnie's dimpled fist pounded the orange-colored sofa without making any visible impression on it. "It's bad enough the way it crowds out everything in the papers and puts in big head-lines about places nobody ever heard of or cares about. And now—and now you've got to go back to it—I don't see why: you've done your share; why, you've been wounded: that's enough for one person to do.—Chrissly Shuman, I believe you'll be glad to be going!"

Some other woman had once talked to him before he went back to war; but not thus. Some other woman: what had she said and who was she?—

A sudden something swept over him—a sense that utterly reversed every emotion experienced since his return. He stood up. He could not comprehend why, but he knew that he uttered a master truth when he heard himself replying to her pout:

"You shust *bet* I'll be glad to go!"

Glad indeed! This was not at all what she had expected: it was senseless. The idea of a man pretending happiness at a return to certain discomfort and possible death! She could only gape at him from the orange-colored sofa.

"'F I stayed here much longer," vowed Chrissly, staring wildly at her, "I'd git right drunk an' then srow myself in the Susquehanny!"

She saw it now as a reflection on her wiles: he was telling her that she made him tired! Flaming, she sprang to her feet. She thrust her angry face close to his. There shot before her memory the recollection of his awkward advances in the old days and of her scorn of them, nor did she fail to see in a new light the advances that she had just been making and that he had repulsed. These rough soldiers thought they were bet-

ter than anybody else. What had Chrissly Shuman been, anyway?

"You're a horrid pig!" she cried; "I'd like to slap your face!" She had often before struck impertinent youth, but now it was as much to her own amazement as to his that she swung her open palm across his intent eyes. "You're a horrid pig!" she repeated.

Chrissly was blinded, but, with the word and the blow, more had come to him to remain than any sense that was temporarily taken away. He reeled backward, he clapped his hands to his face, but through his hands he shouted:

"*Cochon!* That's it: that's what fer she said when I hit him; that's what *I* said first time in the trenches. I got it now. Why—why—" His hands came down. He looked again at Minnie, and then he looked, terribly, fixedly, beyond her, across the sofa, as if he would pierce the wall: "*Léonie!*" he cried. "*C'est toi! C'est toi! Ah, ma petite! Tu vas bien? Tu es là, toujours, dans l'auberge? Tu ne m'a pas oublié—tu ne m'a pas oublié?*"

Minnie did not understand a word, but she understood that she had somehow lost him. She cried out to him in her injured pride, but what she saw before her was a man she did not know.

Chrissly jammed his trench-cap on his head and dashed from the house as if the French inn that he was thinking of stood just across the street.

### III

Nevertheless, when, two days later, he left the farm for Americus, whence he was to take the train for Doncaster, he went away in not quite the same mood. It was one thing to turn from a Minnie proved worthless to a suddenly remembered and realizedly ill-used Léonie; it was another to say good-by for a second time to his father and mother. The first time had been hard enough; now he knew to what it was he was going. . . .

Tears blotted out the house, and the two homely figures at

the gate, before his wagon reached that turn of the road which would itself have drawn a curtain. He loved the place and the people in it, and he wanted to carry the clear picture of it and them out there to the land of mud and filth, of misery and death, to which he was returning.

## IV

Blunston was crossing Second Street as Chrissly's wagon rattled down Elm Avenue. The elder man knew Chrissly now, as all the town did, and stopped in the middle of the way.

"You're Mr. Shuman, aren't you?" Blunston held a yellow piece of paper in his hand.

Chrissly nodded.

"You saw Andy—Andy Brown in . . .?" A gesture toward the eastern horizon completed the question.

"Yes, sir. He give me some *Spys*."

"There's a chance that you can do something for me . . . for him."

"I'll do anysing I can, sir."

"The fact is," said Blunston, "I've just received some rather disquieting news."

## V

In Paris, twenty-four hours previously, Andy had been among the ruins of his hopes and set about a Spartan reconstruction. He was acting on the hard theory that asserts the possible victory of ideals pitted against realities.

Relentlessly, he remembered the wounded rabbit that he had once been too nerveless to kill. He remembered the bloody face of the soldier that died in his arms in the shelled headquarters-town beyond Toul. He grimly reviewed the corruptions, the abominations and inevitable indecencies of the trenches, the horrible pandemonium of battle and the sight and smell of slaughter and decay, and the imagination that had helped him to write truly made him feel too clearly. He reached, nevertheless, a decision; he went to see a doctor, and came out with his red head high: the girl he had mistaken for

the goddess was only a woman of the theater, but that did not prove the goddess inexistent; the Hun was at the gates, but he had not yet entered them; the direction of his country's effort was either stiff-necked and blind, or else criminally incompetent and itself profiteering for power, but the spirit of the men was the old spirit of America, and even yet that spirit would win, even yet, because of it, democracy, both at home and abroad, would somehow triumph over autocracy. Though through lips of clay, divinity had spoken:

"The cause is bigger than its mistakes."

He went to an insurance-office in the Boulevard Haussmann and transacted some lengthy business. He went to another office. From the latter he sought the rue Auber and dispatched a cable-message to Blunston.

Twilight was falling as he crossed the Place de l'Opéra. A group of American Red Cross workers passed him, dressed as if hurrying on some assignment to the front. They were singing, and he caught the words:

"And we won't  
Come back  
Till it's over  
Over There!"

He was looking across his shoulder at them and not, as he should have done in so perilous a place, in the direction in which he was going. He walked into the short arms of the comfortably swathed McGregor.

"Hello!" cried the contractor. "Here you are at last! Now you've got to talk to me." He peered at Andy. "You look solemn."

"I'm not down-hearted," Andy qualified.

"Well, you know what the doctor said when they called him in to look at the man that fell off the Woolworth Building: 'Twenty-five wounds; the first fifteen are fatal, but the last ten are luckily not dangerous.' Come on and have dinner at a new place I know. Good food. It's too cloudy for an air-raid, and the gun stopped at four-thirty—I never go out till the municipal authorities phone me it does. Besides, we've

something to celebrate to-night. Come on;" he winked persuasively: "I've got something to tell you, and you look as if you had something to tell me."

"I don't think I ought to," said Andy. He could not help liking the rascal.

"Not another party in your rooms?" McGregor poked him in the ribs and then drew hastily away from Andy's quickly warning glance. "Oh, I knew it was all right and all that, but I did hear about it, and really it was indiscreet. Look here"—he grew quite grave—"what I want to see you about is Miss Raeburn, for one thing—"

"I don't want to hear about her," said Andy, "and you oughtn't to want to tell. Please don't do it."

"And the other thing's Garcia," McGregor insisted.

"He can't do anything more to me," said Andy.

"He can't, can't he? That's all you know about it, my son. Come on anyhow and eat. I tell you we've got to celebrate."

Andy had been full of his own concerns: "Celebrate what?"

"You don't mean to say you haven't heard?" McGregor poured out the glad news:

The miracle had happened. The French performed the first part of it: tired and harassed as they were, the war-weary army of that people whom all the rest of the world used to regard as merely mercurial said to itself: "We have to do our work all over again"—and began doing it forthwith; the reserves that "couldn't get up until Sunday" got there on Saturday; they stopped the first advance of the German offensive. The second portion was performed by the British: their Fifth Army was rallied, and the other parts of their line held fast. The third phase fell to the lot of America: knowing the seriousness of the situation, the English premier sent for the American secretary of war, who was then in London; the American secretary of war hurried to Paris, where he was seen by the French premier; next the American secretary of war sent for the American commander-in-chief, and, finally, the American commander-in-chief completed the unity of command under Foch by offering that officer, on the part of America, "all we have and all we are."

To hear McGregor tell it, a stranger would have thought that the contractor had all along advocated such a cause:

"So you see, I was right when I kept saying it would all come out for the best in the end. Somebody had to put the screws on, but he did it in plenty of time. Now come on, and we'll eat."

Andy had heard him in silence. Now he said:

"I can't do that, but I'm much obliged for the news. It wouldn't have made any difference in what I was going to do, even if I'd known it, but it's fine news and I'm glad it's happened."

McGregor blew out his always puffy cheeks. "What you were going to do? D'you have another exposure on hand? What was it?"

"No," said Andy, slowly smiling, "no exposure. I'm through with them. I'll tell you what it was. . . ."

## VI

The cable-message that Andy had sent from the office in the rue Auber, the message that Blunston held in his hand when he stopped Chrissy Shuman on Elm Avenue, read thus:

"Bond declared forfeit have insured life to protect make it easy but tell mother have enlisted."



## CHAPTER XXII

CONTAINING SOME ADVENTURES OF A PUPIL IN THE SCHOOL OF WAR, AND SHOWING HOW LÉONIE DID NOT WAIT IN VAIN, AND HOW ANDY FOUND HIS SOUL

WHEN he could have had a commission!

And at such a time as this!

McGregor had offered, argued, pleaded in vain. Where to Andy, in a stubborn modesty, made brief answers to the effect that such a commission as the contractor could get for him would, since he was a novice at military matters, hold him somewhere behind the lines, when what he wanted was to fight. As for the time—well, examining physicians proved to be not so exacting as formerly, and this was precisely the time when every fellow was needed. Finally, he broke away from McGregor's grasp of his lapel and almost ran up the Avenue de l'Opéra.

McGregor looked after him, chewing a cigar. Then he said:

"It's a woman. It's that pretty actress!"

He was genuinely worried. War was a splendid thing—for people one was not too fond of—yet it was not, in McGregor's view, a thing for Andy. Toward him the Chicagoan's attitude had never been feigned. He felt at their first meeting, one of those sudden likings for the lad to which none is so predisposed as your cautious business man. Their subsequent social relationship, revealing Andy's boyish frankness and matter-of-fact manliness, awoke affection. Once or twice, to be sure, their purposes ran counter to each other, but that was only in the field of hard business, and even there Andy's able and fair fighting, not to speak of his plucky opposition to heavy odds, evoked admiration though it forbade mercy. McGregor

would have done anything for his friend except permit him to expose the aircraft failure.

And now, here was this matter of an actress. McGregor liked Sylvia, considering the little he had seen of her; he had even allowed himself to speculate upon the possibility of liking her a great deal; a woman's past never annoyed him, nor her present, so long as he saw the chance of changing that; but for Andy—it wouldn't do. There was the mysterious recipient of her money! She could not be serious about this young fellow: before a woman throws herself at a man, she finds out whether he is a good catch, and Andy's lack of ability in that particular was patent. What was the New Orleans fellow's name? He'd made a careful note of it. A husband, of course: actresses always had censored husbands in their background, unpublishable persons that nevertheless were never killed, rarely in any sense made place for some one more desirable before some one less desirable secured irrefutable claims for their place. There was no use looking them up: if you found them, you always found them out of the question. He himself was hardened, but not so Andy. Oh, it wouldn't do at all!

That was why, that very evening, Andy received a labored letter from McGregor, borne by a Ritz *chasseur*. It began with some tender reminiscences of the late Mrs. McGregor, intimated, rather broadly, that Sylvia had better be given up, hard as such a process might prove, and ended:

"Take an old fellow's advice and try it. Nobody ever knows what he can do till he tries—that's why a lot of people never know what they can do."

Andy burned the letter, worried about his forfeited bond, recollected that his mother would hear of his enlistment from Blunston before receiving his letter telling her that all was well and went about packing his belongings for storage. He wrote a note to Owen Evans. He did not get to bed until morning.

"Men," he said to himself as he turned in, "are somehow always worse than women. Even when they're talking about

a—a bad woman, they always show themselves worse than she is.”

He was too tired to dream.

## II

Meanwhile, McGregor had called on Sylvia. He considered it his duty to prove her—a not unpleasant duty, but a duty nevertheless—and that a decisive conclusion did not decide him is a fact which nobody familiar with McGregor will consider paradoxical. An interview in a hotel parlor rarely proves anything, anyhow.

She seemed glad to see him. She even let him sit beside her as Andy had once, in this same parlor, sat. And she thanked him again for sending that money.

“No trouble at all,” said McGregor. He regarded Tac lying at her feet. “It got there all right, did it?”

“Quite. I had a cable.”

“From Mr. Rayburn?” His eyes could be sudden when they wanted to be: they were sudden now.

To no purpose, however: hers had in them something like a smile. “From the person you were good enough to send the money to, of course.”

She understood him, and she wanted him to know that she did. McGregor liked her the better for that.

“I get you,” he chuckled. “Did you ever hear about the tramp that knocked at the kitchen-door and told the lady-of-the-house he didn’t know where his next meal was coming from? She said: ‘You’ve come to the wrong place to find out; this isn’t an information-bureau.’—Seen anything of young Brown lately?”

Sylvia bent to pat Tac, and so her face was hidden. “Not lately.”

“He’s a nice boy,” said McGregor.

“Very,” said Sylvia.

“But,” said McGregor slowly, “he’s only a boy.”

To that Sylvia said nothing.

“Only a boy,” McGregor repeated slowly. He produced his wonderful cigar-case. “Mind if I smoke? No? Thanks.”

He lighted the chosen cigar. "Anybody could make a fool of him. I'm always afraid somebody will."

She looked up now. Her face was quite composed.

"I wouldn't be," she said. Her eyes maintained their depths, but her smile was perfectly worldly-wise. "There isn't the slightest danger, Mr. McGregor."

"You're sure?"

He studied her carefully, but decided her assurance authentic.

She answered: "Quite."

McGregor sighed relief. He chuckled. He put out his hand.

"Shake," said he.

They shook hands, and he held her hand.

"Miss Raeburn," he said, "I wish I could see more of you. I'm a lonely man all the time, and I'm mighty lonely over here."

He might have said more, but she withdrew her hand so quickly that Tac, disturbed by the movement, looked up meaningly at her companion.

"I'm so very busy," she murmured.

McGregor rose with a little bow.

"That's for you to say," he told her. "The longer I live, the less I know about ladies. You remember the five-year-old that brought her three-year-old sister for vaccination? She said: 'Doctor, sis don't know her left arm from her right, so maw washed 'em both.'" He offered his hand. "It's for friendship this time," he explained. "We can be friends?"

In friendship she met him. "Of course."

McGregor's puffy face grew sincerely grave. "And we'll try to help the boy."

"Andy?"

"Yes. He may be needing friends. He's enlisted." . . .

### III

It was a chilly night, but McGregor, as, a half-hour later, he wheezed into his waiting motor, mopped sweat from his cheeks.

"I guess my work's not calculated to make gentlemen," he murmured to himself. "Anyhow, I *don't* understand women—not a bit I don't. Says she don't care for him, and yet, all the time I try to make up to her, she's as ready to fly away as a butterfly on a flower. Says she don't care for him, but says it with the kind of smile the thoroughbreds put on when they're sacrificing themselves for some fool notion or other. Says she don't care for him, and then faints when I tell her he's enlisted!"

## IV

Andy, waking before dawn, had only to dress and go to the Gare de l'Est, where a sergeant would provide him with transportation to the place at which he was to join his unit. He was glad that he had done his packing, instead of leaving that to the kindly proffered offices of Mme. Lafon: it made departure easier that the rooms should be pretty well dismantled. He looked at the pile of luggage for which the storage-men were to call later in the day and wondered how he had collected so much when he had brought so little; he looked also at the grate that held the ashes of McGregor's letter and at the curtains between which Sylvia had stood.

He blew out the candle.

## V

Then, in the resounding railway-station, with gray-blue *poilus* rolling trainward, incredible packs on their backs, a mother on one arm and a sweetheart on the other, Sylvia met him. His impulse was to dodge away from her, but it was at once evident that she was there to seek him.

She was pale—he thought that perhaps she was over-worked; he had heard that she had again been making a tour of the *foyers*—yet she smiled as she came through the crowd. He saw that immediately.

"I'm so sorry not to have seen you all these days," she said. "I tried to get in touch with you and couldn't. Last night Mr. McGregor told me you'd enlisted. He told me

you'd be going from here this morning. So I came to wish you luck."

Andy tried to make reply.

"I wanted you to know I was still your friend," said Sylvia.

"Thanks," said Andy. "I'm—it was good of you to get up here at this time of day."—But she wasn't changed! His heart hardened. — "Those papers were returned," he said. "Somebody sent them back. I started the interview on its way. I hope it gets through and has some effect. It will be my last newspaper job for a long while."

They were standing beside a closed ticket-window, a little withdrawn from the hurrying hundreds that filled the station. She started at his words:

"Somebody?"

"Yes. Garcia, I guess. Garcia."

He held her with his eyes as he repeated the name. In the so familiar way, her brows puckered. She flushed, caught her breath. She bit her lip.

"I see," she said.

"He probably thought he didn't need them. He'd fixed me another way."

"How?" She barely breathed the monosyllable.

"Oh," Andy tried to laugh, and he looked to one side: "It doesn't matter, does it?"

"Because you've enlisted?"

"Yes—because I've enlisted." He wouldn't look at her again.

"That's one of the things I've come to tell you about; and to wish you good-by," she said. "I think—I think you're wonderfully brave—Andy."

He did laugh now. "For the love of Mike," he said, "don't talk that way. I found out they'd have me at last, so of course I went."

"But you kept on trying."

"Look at all the other fellows. I couldn't have stayed out and had any self-respect left. As a matter of fact, I'm scared to death here for fear I'll be scared to death"—he nodded

his red head toward the train-shed as toward the battle-line—"out there."

"When—" Again she caught her breath. Had he looked at her, he would have seen how wistful was her face. "When do you have to get on your train?"

"In ten minutes." He shifted his feet. "I've got to report to a sergeant at the gate—"

"Then I mustn't keep you."

He was ashamed of himself. After all, she had never encouraged him to believe in her—never, indeed, been anything but friendly. And this coming to see him off: that was uncommonly friendly.

"I'll be in training for a long time, I guess," he said.

She shook her head. He glanced at her once, very quickly, and saw how her hair caught all there was of the early light, but he did not see her eyes. "Not long. Not now. They need men too badly."

"And where'll *you* be?"

Her face was white indeed. "Amusing my soldiers." It was she who now looked aside.

Andy clapped a hand on her shoulder. "Sylvia, you hate to see a friend go, don't you?"

Her head was bowed. "Yes," she said.

"And you've some sort of silly notion about a fellow not coming back?"

She did not answer: there was no need.

"Well, a fellow oughtn't to count on it," he said; "but lots of them do come back, you know. I hope"—yes, he knew now that he did hope it!—"I hope I come back, and we can be friends again."

Just friends: he meant that. He would keep his ideals, but he could at least be friends with clay from which the spirit of those ideals had fled.

"We will be," said Sylvia: "good friends." She raised her eyes: they were bright. "And, if I may say it as a friend, I want you to go. I'm proud of you." She had her cue now: he had given it her. "I'm proud that a friend should go." She took his hand from her shoulder, pressed it lightly—

dropped it. "Hurry," she said. "You'll be late if you don't, and it would never do to begin being a soldier by being late." She was bidding him farewell with a smile. "Good luck to you—friend!" . . .

When she had run a few steps, she stopped and looked after him, but saw that he did not once turn.

Close by the station was a church into which she entered. Before a figure of the Blessed Virgin—a poor modern thing, it was—she knelt until she knew that his train had gone.

## VI

Andy sat beside a window in a third-class carriage and watched the brown fields and white hamlets race past him. Luckily, he was the only American there, and the other passengers assumed that he could not speak French. Through his brain, pictures, rather than thoughts, were hurrying much as the objects along the railway-track were hurrying before his eyes, but the realities had a certain order and a limited variety; his memories had neither.

There was his mother. He knew how she would seem to take the news of his enlistment. But how would her heart receive it?

There was Blunston. Would Blunston understand?

And the newspapers that he had been serving. Perhaps he should have given them fair warning; perhaps, in performing one duty, he was betraying another.

He would have to work hard and long to make good the forfeited bond. After the war was over. Unless, of course—

But he wasn't going to be killed—

He hoped— How frightful if he were maimed, if his whole earning-capacity were spoiled, if he came out of this hell of war a creature hideous and useless, like some that one had seen on wheeled chairs in the sunlight before military hospitals and would some day soon see squatted at street corners with an upturned hat deposited beside them—the pedestrians with averted faces—the clank of dropped coppers!

He remembered Americus, and Elm Avenue of a bright



Saturday night in midsummer. He remembered its kindly people.

Minnie Taylor: she would have had a chance, if she had got over here.

What had McGregor meant by writing such a letter—and what did it matter what he meant, now?

It had been kind of Sylvia to come to wish him Godspeed, and he had behaved insufferably to her! He had blamed her because she was not what he had thought her. Why, she always disclaimed being that! There was, of course, no doubt about her; but one could be kindly without being a saint: there was more than a single sort of nobility, even for women. He would try to be her friend, when he came back. More he could not be, but this he could and would. His love—

That remained. It remained loyal to his ideal. The ideal lived: it was immortal. His fault it was—not Sylvia's, nor the faultless ideal's—if he had confused the ideal with the fallible human. The dream, freed of earth and its beauty emancipated, would endure.

It was one with democracy. He shared it, a goddess, with all these young enthusiasts whom he was about to join. Fronting the overwhelming hosts out of Germany, she would at last overwhelm them; unseen by martinets, she would compel them to be men—was already compelling them. Had she been deluded by a few autocratic politicians at home? She would return, victorious, to scourge them from her desecrated temple. . . .

## VII

He came to the place for which he had set out. A calm rested on the dun hills. At first it was impossible to believe that there was a war. Perhaps he was dreaming; perhaps he would wake up in his attic room in Americus with the thumbed school-books, and his paints, and the dance programs looking at him from his dressing-table and his mother telling him that if he did not get up he would be late at the office.

But no, he was awake. He was on the station platform in

charge of another sergeant, who looked at him scornfully and demanded: "What the hell did *you* enlist for?" They were tramping a road full of great ruts of hardened mud. From some unseen valley came a clatter of machine-gun practice like the noise of typewriters in a busy office. They skirted the foot of a knoll and saw a regiment drilling in extended order. They were standing beside a white farmhouse, and from above it fluttered the beautiful Flag.

Andy's eyes filled at the sight of it. More than ever it was now his flag: he was at last a soldier.

### VIII

Or learning to be, and in a hard school, under hard masters and among hard pupils. He was a "doughboy": he had chosen the infantry because he thought that it was the infantry which did the most arduous work of war. His unit was newly arrived and had had little training before it set sail from America—some twenty men, last-moment failures in aviation, had never shouldered a rifle before landing in France—but there was a sprinkling of sergeants from the ranks of the old Regular Army and some corporals out of the National Guard, and these, whose previous experience seemed to Andy to include a year or two each as under-keepers in prisons or as chain-gang bosses, were putting the utterly unlearned through the "School of the Soldier," the "School of the Squad" and the "Manual of Arms." It looked hopeless, it was profanely declared impossible; yet, under one's eyes, it was being done.

Andy used to think his correspondent's knapsack heavy. Within twenty-four hours, his identification tag newly suspended from his neck, he was learning what number-two man in the rear rank does in response to the order "Squads Right" while carrying eight and a half pounds of rifle on his shoulder, two hundred and twenty cartridges in his belt and bandoliers, a bayonet in a heavy scabbard, a haversack, a first-aid pouch, a filled canteen topped by a drinking-cup, and, down the middle of his back, under an entrenching tool, a marvel-

ously put together and speedily spilled roll that his companions called an O. D. (or olive drab) Baby and that held the half of a shelter tent, five metal tent-pins, a poncho, a blanket, a meat-can and a condiment can, knife, fork and spoon, underclothes, socks, shoelaces, comb, tooth-brush, soap, towel and a sewing-outfit. It was not until evening that number three-man told him how to roll one sock to look like two and a shirt to resemble shirt and drawers.

"For me," Andy was soon writing home, "the worst of it is the rifle. A bit of grease on it is a misdemeanor and a rust-speck's a crime. Nobody ever told us how to clean the confounded things, but I've found a man that stole a can of gasoline from the truck-gang, and a few drops of that (if you're not caught) will do in ten minutes more than all my rubbing does in an hour. Before I found that out, I had a hard time. The day before an inspection, we marched, in the usual rain, halted in it, stacked arms, retook arms and marched again. Back in billets, I thought I'd never clean my gun—just splashed it with oil and let it go at that. Next morning, when the inspection began, I happened to see the number on it (you have to remember all sorts of numbers) and found it wasn't mine at all. Retaking arms on that march, my file-leader'd given me his gun, so I traded for my own then and there. Well, that file-leader was a hunting-man from Maine; he understood rifles and'd got mine into good shape, but he got a call on his own when the captain saw the way I'd left it!"

Rushed through the Infantry Drill Regulations, the awkward squads were redistributed about the unit and absorbed in the general scheme for intensive training. They were set to digging five kinds of trenches, to constructing the sandbag loopholes and the hopper, to rigging a hand-grenade screen and to do strange things with barbed wire.

"Imagine a little valley of pasture lands," wrote Andy. "When you first look at it, you don't see anything strange, but when you get nearer you can make out that the fields are all cut up by lines, like fresh furrows that a weighted plow

would make behind a runaway horse. They're really a tangle of dug-outs, first-line and communication trenches—and I helped make 'em!—It's all mighty different, being a soldier, from writing about being."

A company would disappear into those rifle-pits and presently project above them cardboard figures of men. At once—for this drill was conducted under a time test—another company would run forward from a given distance, form as "skirmishers," drop to the ground and fire a designated number of rounds "at will"; rise, run on, drop and fire a second time. The bullets rattled against the farthest hillside, tore up little spurts of dust in front of the trenches, pierced the cardboard enemy. A third advance and a third volley, and then, after the score was registered, a second company repeated the performance.

Hand-grenade practice followed. Next, the machine-guns would rush up and were put into action in an attempt at record time. After that came the bayonet-charge.

Fronting a barbed-wire entanglement, in a line of trenches three deep, was a company of dummy men, on the breast of each of which lay a numbered paper-tag; behind the trenches was some rough ground, and back of that—perhaps fifty paces back—a row of sticks with a tin-can poised on the top of every stick. A whistle would blow: out of other trenches leaped Andy and his companions, rifles in hand, bayonets fixed; they plunged through the wire and at the dummies, each soldier collecting upon his bayonet as many of the numbered tags as he could, and then, having raced over the roughened ground, they flung themselves prone and fired at the tin-cans.

If this sort of thing at first sickened Andy, the preliminary lectures were worse. For them, a cheerful major stood, with rifle and fixed bayonet in hand, before a swinging dummy. The dummy had a lolling head, for all the world like that of a hanged man, and clamped at right angles to the figure's side was a stick that made erratic thrusts; numbers were painted on him to indicate his vital parts.

"Now, when you get into a charge," said the major merrily, "remember that, as sure as you don't get your man, he'll get you. You must get him first, or you'll be out of luck."

He proceeded to tell how the old method was now harmless:

"The best place to get your man is in the belly, because that's fatal, and there aren't any bones to tangle you up. Try and get him in the belly. If you've got to go for his neck, be sure it's with a cut and not a lunge. If you jab him there, instead of cutting, like as not you'll run your bayonet up in his skull, and it'll stick there, and while you've got your foot on his face, wrenching it out, the man behind him will get you."

The listeners' expressions were worth watching. Some began with a grin; few finished so.

That sort of life left little daytime for thought, but a good deal for personal discouragement, and some, even, for a battle against tears. It was not until several days had passed that he realized that he was not the only recruit incurring the sergeant's condemnations, that to be sworn at and despaired of was a regular part of the training and that one might be a brandedly hopeless case to-night and a genuine soldier to-morrow.

## IX

A caterpillar accustomed to one sort of leaves is likely to starve himself to death rather than eat of another sort, no matter how good for his kind in general the second sort may be, and Andy could not be expected to like at once the new conditions of his life. There had been a time when he was the sartorial glory of the *Americus, Pa., Daily Spy*, and had considered a man with dirty hands as much to be avoided as a leper, and for similar reasons; subsequent experiences had broadened him, but no hardening process had begun when he came to a camp where his first introduction to a barber left him shorn like some sort of semi-convict, where his only clothes were a speedily soiled uniform that had been too small

to begin with, and where the niceties of civilization could not have been practised had they been deemed requisite.

The kitchen was an only partly converted blacksmith-shop, and most of the provisions were piled outside of it in lath cases that did not protect them from the flies. Every meal in which potatoes were to play a part—and that was most meals—was begun by eight men sitting on the curb and “peeling the spuds” beside the gutter. Sweating cooks, inside, stirred the contents of gigantic pots with whittled sticks. At mess-time, the hungry filed by the servers, and the latter, out of huge ladles, flung the food into the tin utensils that the former held out to them. When the weather was dry, Andy squatted in the road and ate there; when it was wet, he leaned against a house-wall. He soon discovered that a service-shirt is the army’s only substitute for a napkin.

His dwelling-place was the loft of an ancient barn. There were rats in the barn and on its inhabitants fleas and lice, so that one’s spare time was largely devoted to futile efforts toward appreciably decreasing the number of one’s vermin. The roof of the barn leaked, and its only window was glassless. The sloping walls were decorated by one or two pictures clipped from the Sunday supplements of American newspapers, and somebody had put up a rude sign:

### SPIT ON THE FLOOR

*If that’s what you do at home, for*

WE WANT YOU TO FEEL AT HOME HERE!

His straw-bed was always damp, and yet he was never sorry when the hour came to seek it.

Out in the muddy street a bugle would sound. His dormitory companions would knock out the pipes and pinch the cigarettes that had filled the place with acrid smoke. Candles would be extinguished. The sole remaining light would be a sputtering lamp that gave forth more of odor than of illumination. Instantly, the other men would fall asleep in whatever posture happened to be that in which their bodies struck the straw. They breathed stertorously; they scratched themselves without waking.

To Andy they became at once so many ghosts. The whole world faded away, and he was left alone with his fear.

For he was afraid that he was going to be afraid. By day, he could make himself believe in that metamorphosis into a soldier. At the approach of night he always turned in gladly certain that his infinite weariness would steep him in sleep. But no sooner was the ribaldry of the hayloft silenced than he was wide awake and trembling. He saw himself running away from an approaching party of raiders, fainting at the order to go over the top; he saw himself in every rôle that a coward could assume. He wondered why none of the other fellows should feel this fear of fear: they all talked like berserkers. He tried to tell himself that bravery was a matter of the will, but he remembered the rabbit that he could not kill, and the major's lectures on bayonetting; and he said to himself that perhaps his arms and legs would rebel against his will.

Physically, he was not a strong boy, and it was only grit that made it possible for him to survive the physical hardships of his training. It was this same grit that he opposed to his dread of cowardice.

## X

His was one of the early units of the draft-army to reach France, and in Andy's company were young fellows of each year covered by the first conscription law. The wide democracy of the uniform was complete: every trade was represented, and most of the professions; there were club-men and mill-workers, bond-salesmen and shop-clerks; there was a young lawyer and a college under-graduate, and a sturdy Irishman that had begun his career in the police. Ibráhím Reshid was Turkish-born, and said his prayers with his face toward Mecca and splashed water on himself thrice a day; Carlo Angelelli, who looked like a Greek statue, came from Calabria and went to mass on Sundays in the village church, whereas, though he resembled a Genoese and had a brogue that would have pronounced him an Irishman, Christos

Christopoulos was a native of Aetolikon and had no church to go to in the camp. There was Kozloff, a Russian, who used to push rolling-chairs at Atlantic City, and Schwartz from Hochwald and, finally, there were such men as Winters and Levy, Davies, Campbell and Flynn, whose folk, although Flynn also spoke in a brogue, had lived in the United States for at least three generations. These last had all the unemotional practicality with which the American masks the fact that he is a dreamer, and adopted all the coarseness under which he is likely to conceal such troubles as nostalgia; but every one of the company wanted, above all else, a chance to fight.

"If the damn-fool brass-hats'd only send us in, I wouldn't bother so much about home," said tow-headed Winters, "and there'd be something else for Johnson and Ryan to yell their damn' throats out at, then."

Johnson, a cross-eyed factory-foreman, was corporal of Andy's squad, possessed of a really remarkable vocabulary in oaths that shook his whole body as it hurled its missiles from his lips. Heavy-fisted Ryan was the company's first-sergeant, who had been a welter-weight boxer and did not find his previous trade useless in the practice of his present calling.

"Ryan never hits me," said Andy, but he knew that the sergeant treated him with a pitying contempt that was worse than blows.

"Oh, me neither," bristled Winters. "I'd like to see him try it! He'd find somethin' ticklin' his damn' back, first time we went over the top."

"He chust keeps his fist for Reshid und them foreign fellers," Schwartz explained.

One of the lieutenants was scarcely more popular than Ryan: Wilson, graduate from a Reserve Officers' Training Camp, whom the men called "President"; but he was soon to be transferred elsewhere. The other, Graaberg, second-lieutenant and son of Norwegian parents, everybody liked. Their captain—"but he only got his rank for the duration of the war," said Winters—was named Bates, a wiry person of forty-five, whose face resembled smoked meat, and whose tem-



per had been soured by West Point jealousies of his advancement—he had enlisted as a private during the Philippine rebellion—and who, generally silent, seemed to speak only under the impulsion of a temper no longer to be restrained.

## XI

In his scant leisure, Andy hung about the Y. M. C. A. hut at the end of the village and wrote his shy letters home. They were intended to be cheerful letters and were the poorest piece of work he did in France. To Blunston he quoted the infantryman's song:

“Here come the doughboys  
With dirt behind their ears!  
Here come the doughboys—  
Their pay is in arrears!  
The cavalry,  
Artillery,  
And the lousy engineers—  
They couldn't lick the doughboys in  
A hundred thousand years!”

To his mother he made light of his various inoculations and their immediate effects of headache and a sore arm; he joked about the fleas, but said nothing of the lice and did not tell how he was sometimes wakened, of nights, by rats that scurried across his face.

He had a fight with Flynn, who was his file-leader and, quite truthfully, accused Andy of tramping on other people's heels: Flynn had to knock him down three times, and even then Andy would not admit defeat, and Winters dragged him away. Davies, a giant of a fellow, gave him maliciously incorrect instructions about clip-fire, laughed at him when the consequent error called forth picturesque insults from Sergeant Ryan and earned a grudge that Andy carried for many days. All the men in his company, talking as if they had had experience, filled him with tales of the enemy's power, told of the terrible slaughter of semicircling German ma-

chine-guns that fired seven hundred shots a minute, and affirmed that the American Army's hospitals in France were already taxed beyond their two hundred thousand capacity. . . . Andy looked away and wrestled with the fear of fear.

"They say we ain't got a damn' aeroplane of our own at the front," said Winters.

"I was talking to a man," said the gigantic Davies, "that has a brother up in the artillery, a man in C Company. He says all our guns, pretty near, are French. He told me we hadn't got across any explosive shells bigger than the three-inch ones. We can't shell our objectives, he said, and so, when we doughboys go over the top, the Heinies chaw us all up. Gimme a cigarette, somebody."

"The tanks can go ahead of the infantry," said Andy.

"'Could,' you mean," Davies disdainfully corrected: "we haven't got any tanks.—Gimme a match, will you?"

Yet, when they were not playing practical jokes on Andy, these men were all complaining because the high command did not send them at once into action. They hated the high command; there was none of them that did not consider himself a better strategist than any member of the staff.

"Ker-ist," said Campbell, whose face was always caked with dirt, "I wisht I was boss for one day. We'd all go in to-morrow and walk the Dutchmen across the Rhine." He proceeded to draw maps in the dust and show how his campaign could not fail.

Captain Bates and Lieutenant Wilson were daily disparaged. "Know 'em as well as if I'd et 'em for last night's supper," Winters would say, "an' they taste like slum." By quotations from the Infantry Drill Regulations and the Field Service Regulations, he would prove his assertion; but when, one day, a man from another company agreed with him, Winters thrashed that outsider.

Flynn, the squat American of Irish parentage, was one of the few that never joined in these complaints until blows followed mere words. Then he was an active participant; the rest of the time, his usual commentary confined itself to a single point of view: "What's the use o' worryin'? Oi used

to, but I soon learnt it's little enough good it does us to bother our heads about th' War Departimint, er th' brass-hats either. Poor t'ings, they dawn't know nothin' at all, they dawn't. You guys give me a pain."

It was only Levy that could answer this. He was a young Jew that had come out of college and had still the mental marks of the sophomore. He objected that they were all having their individualities destroyed by being fitted to a pattern, that they were being made into soldiers according to a mathematical formula, of which the mathematics were faulty. Their discussions continued until somebody turned the talk to home, when Winters was sure to accuse everybody's sweetheart, and his own first, of infidelity during their absence, or until they united in a chorus of derision for every regiment in the army except their own.

There were times when Andy thought that the sheer stupidity and fullness of those days would drive him mad. Until the training began to harden him, he was sickened by the coarseness of it all. No matter what the previous life of these young men had been, this routine existence seemed to lower them all to a common level; their very speech became equalized, and it was never worse than at mess. There was no privacy in any act of life, and, apparently, no thought that was held sacred.

One day, walking down the village street, Andy said as much to Winters.

"Whaddje mean 'sacred'?" Winters demanded.

"Well, there used to be some things a fellow didn't talk about," said Andy. "Weren't there?"

"Sure, Mike. But we're soldiers now. I only wish they'd let us be honest-to-God soldiers." He went on to damn the army as worthless; then he drew himself to attention before the advance of an erect military figure, a man with a weather-beaten face and silvered hair.

"Salute, you lousy skunk!" whispered Winters. His eyes sparkled admiration. "This here's *our* general, this is!"

## XII

Then, for Andy's salvation, Chrissly came to camp—enviously a veteran and still more amiably fresh from home—a Chrissly in a new uniform, his accent almost entirely gone with his return to France. He had been transferred to Andy's own regiment and assigned to Andy's own company. Blunston, he said, had arranged part of it from Washington, and the colonel did the rest here.

They almost embraced each other. They talked for a long time only of Americus, and Andy was as overjoyed at the copies of the *Spy* that Chrissly brought him as Chrissly had once been at those sent him by Andy. The only subject they avoided mentioning was Minnie Taylor.

"You're lookin' right good," said Chrissly, surveying with approval the soldierly person that Andy had become.

"I'm all right enough," said Andy.

They shook hands again—perhaps it was for the third time since their meeting. Chrissly, who knew an easy way to learn and remember everything, at once took Andy for his especial pupil; being a man that had been wounded, the former farm-boy was a hero in their company, and his ward ceased immediately to be anybody's butt.

## XIII

Chrissly had seen Léonie. By arranging to lose his way the day after landing, he managed to go first to the village in which his own training had been done, and arriving there of an evening, and avoiding any awkward military answers by jumping off the train fifty yards before the station and clambering over a fence, proceeded to the old inn and entered the kitchen through the paved court.

Dinner was over, and the other servants were all in the front of the house. Léonie, worn out by a hard day's work, had been overcome by fatigue as she finished her labors, and, like the healthy animal she was, fell asleep in a chair the moment she finished them. On a freshly scrubbed and lamp-lit table her round arms were outspread, and upon them her

black head rested. Her face was in the light and turned toward the door; Chrissly, entering, saw the grave brows above the closed lids, the dusky cheeks touched with pink, the red lips that, parted ever so little, permitted a pearly hint of the teeth behind them. He saw her firm neck from which the loosened collar was drawn free below the line of the sunburn, and, under it, the full breasts rising and falling regularly. Léonie slept with the abandon of a child; her hands, relaxed, lay open on the table, the fingers only curled above the rosy palms.

Chrissly whispered her name.

She raised her head as a panther does, but he stood in the shadow, and she did not at once see him.

"Léonie!" he repeated.

He came forward.

With a little cry, she put out her hands to him. Then, before he could grasp them, they flew to her face to hide the betrayal that she felt there, and when he tried gently to pull her fingers away, they remembered the disorder of her hair, and, that they might repair it, her arms rose high.

She was very beautiful. Where sleep had lain upon her cheeks its warmth still lingered; her eyes were wide with still uncertain wonder. Her woman's guard of self had been down, and there was now no time to raise it. At first instinctively retreating, she nevertheless did not resist when Chrissly, moving with the directness of a boy, recaptured her errant hands; instead, she let him draw them toward him, released them only to place them about his neck as she put up her mouth to his.

*"Mais, mon Dieu, que je suis contente!"* she breathed.

It was the longest moment of his life, because it was that one most full of meaning. He had premeditated nothing, but he had accomplished all. She was his, completely and forever. In that touch of lips it had happened, her transforming surrender. Even her potentialities were his own, her limitations circumscribed by his limitations. It was unchangeable, and Chrissly entered his heaven reverently and in awe.

Outside, under the stars, she confessed, without shame, how she had longed for him, and he, in his recovered French, told her how he had been wounded and how sent home. He told her where he was going, and she confided to him her plan presently to return to her native village, whither other folk that had been exiled were now returning. These lovers swore to meet there "*après la guerre*," and it was not until they began their long parting that she asked her woman's question:

"But it is true, is it not, that you have loved some one else before?"

"Ah, it is true," laughed Chrissly, "but I am much harder to suit than I was then." . . .

#### XIV

The trenches at the camp were narrower than they should have been, and in the practice-charges on them some one was always being bayoneted. Andy was cut in the hand one day, and his comrades hung about him while the wound was dressed.

"Come away from there," Captain Bates grimly ordered. "You'll be seeing all you want of that sort of thing soon enough to suit you."

This made everybody happily certain that the regiment was soon to move.

#### XV

It became a regular evening custom for the company to gather outside the barn in which Andy slept and there listen to Chrissly talking of the people at home.

"I got enough of 'em—all but my own folks," he said. "They made me sick. They're terribly ensusiastic—give you parades an' lots to eat; but they don't *know* nussing. Nearly everybody gets into some sort of a uniform and then sinks he's winning the war—or 'specially her. You ought to hear the fellows with five an' ten dollar a day mill-jobs say they're doin' their part same as us're doin' ourn. The country's full

of soft snaps. There's fourteen-year-old kids gettin' seventeen-fifty a week waitin' on officers' messes at munition-factories, an' we draw a dollar a day to fight in France."

"When we do draw it," amended Winters, who had never heard a gun fired, save in practice.

"An' you can't make 'em unerstand what fer a battle's like," Chrissly continued. "I guess it's so bad nobody could; an' the censors over here, it seems they don't want 'em to, anyways. Besides, they've all kind of got their minds made up about sings. To read the stuff in the papers, you'd sink we was an infant-class at a Sunday-school picnic. The people back there, they don't seem to *want* to know. Try an' make 'em unerstand, an' they just says, 'Well, that was tough, wasn't it now?'—an' go on tellin' you they bought a Liberty Bond as ain't paid fer yet an'll be sold before it is paid fer."

They asked him if it were true that the ports were full of unshipped shells.

"An' then some," said Chrissly. He did not hesitate to give as first-hand what he had received at second. "The Department's distributed the manufacture of parts an' can't assemble 'em. An' tanks! I seen a tank-school up to Gettysburg—some of the people at home took me fer a joyride to Gettysburg in their automobile: six sousand men an' *one* tank! They kep' it in a kind of shed, like it was a sacred white elephant an' the rain might hurt it, an' if you're a good boy they take you around once in a while an' give you a peep at it."

He said he had never seen so many lieutenants as home now boasted, and he was hard on the officers of the Ordnance Department. He thought that stay-at-home soldiers all should wear distinctive uniforms, "'stead of usin' up warm cloth we fellows can't get fer wintertime," and he repeated the remark of the congressman who said Washington officers wore spurs in order to keep their feet on their desks.

"I wonder will they let us have *our* say when we get back home," he would always conclude. "Seem's if *they'd* been doin' all the talkin' an' lawmakin' up to now. All we're good fer's to fight."

## XVI

Andy's hand healed rapidly, but it gave him a few days of leisure, and one of these he employed in a trip to Domrémy. He wanted to see the Bethlehem of Jeanne d'Arc.

The grass was turning green again when he entered the little garden that half the American Army in France already knew, and an ancient sheep-dog dragged a rattling chain from his kennel, only to look at him with the same sort of trustful eyes that were shown him by the children to whom he had given pennies at the gate. The habitual old woman, who vows that she, too, is descended from Jacques of Domrémy, showed him through the flagged apartment with its huge fireplace, through that in which Joan's brother slept, and then into Joan's own.

Just a cell. A cell of hewn stone, such as a nun might inhabit. A cell with a mere slit in the wall through which Andy could see something of the medieval church close by.

That was all. But here the Maid had knelt. Here, as well as in those fields out there, the angels came to her with their mighty message. Here were said some of those prayers that, long ago, saved France.

"A young wench of an eightene years old. Of favour she was counted likesome; of person stronglie made, and manlie; of courage great, hardie, and stout withall; an understander of counsels, though she were not at them; greet semblance of chastitie both of bodie and behavior; the name of Jesus in hir mouth about all their businesses; humble, obedient and fasting divers days." . . .

In a chance magazine at his village "Y," he had come across a poem by Joyce Kilmer:

"My shoulders ache beneath my pack,  
(Lie easier, Cross upon His back.)  
I march with feet that burn and smart,  
(Tread, Holy Feet, upon my heart.)  
Men shout at me who may not speak,



(They scourged Thy back and smote Thy cheek.)  
I may not lift a hand to clear  
My eyes of salty drops that sear,  
(Then shall not fickle soul forget  
Thy agony of bloody sweat.)”

Andy wanted to pray.

Above the doorway, in a niche, stood, where a French monarch had placed it, a mutilated statue:

“The *sale Boche* did that in ’70,” said the old woman.

And then Andy found his soul. . . .

## XVII

There was always singing in the camp of evenings; the men would sit on their bunks, and Davies, Flynn, Winters and Campbell, as a quartette, would lead them in that unprintable American army ballad about a fabulous King of England and *There’s a Long, Long Trail A-winding* with equal fervor and feeling; but heretofore Andy had neither heart nor strength to join in the refrains. He had not sung since he had been in France, and had forgotten that he had a voice. To-night, however, in a lull of the concert and while he scraped his muddy boots, he found himself, to his surprise and that of his companions, singing quite alone, *It’s a Long Way to Tipperary*, just as he had often sung it in the mornings at home when he hurried into his clothes in order not to be late in getting to the office of the *Daily Spy*.

Winters threw a boot at him. “Shut up! Don’t you know that song’s bad luck? French’s army sung it, and they’re all dead men now.”

Chrissly caught the boot and tossed it at Winters’ head. Flynn said:

“Sure an’ shut up yourself! Can’t you hear the boy’s got a voice?”

He had a beautiful, wistful voice, the faithful successor of his choir-days, and there and then there began their homage to it. Later big Davies secured, by highway robbery, a

mouth-organ from a weakling in C Company, and Andy, displacing the unenvious quartette, sang every evening to his admiring comrades. He sang, in his pure, still boyish way, such songs as *Annie Laurie* and *My Old Kentucky Home* and *Old Black Joe*, and he made them all sing *Way Down Upon the Suwannee River*. His popularity was achieved; separately and confidentially, all the men he knew came to him and talked about their parents and told him the names of their girls back home.

## XVIII

On that first evening of his singing, Andy was handed a letter from McGregor. The contractor wrote regularly and gravely, collecting Andy's mail in Paris and forwarding it; his manner was that of a man with a moral debt to discharge. He now said he considered it dangerous in the capital on account of the long-range gun, and was going to Aix-les-Bains; he understood that was an American rest-camp, and he hoped soon to see Andy there.

"I can do my work almost as well in Aix as here," he wrote, "and I can't do it at all if I'm killed. You know what the Tommy said when the shell exploded in the trench and somebody yelled that Bill's head was blown off; he said, 'Well, where *is* 'is 'ead? Blymme, 'e was smokin' my pipe!' Now you'd better take a lesson from me and not go exposing yourself unnecessarily; a dead soldier's no use to his country."

There was not a word about Sylvia. Andy leaned from the loft-window and tore the letter to bits, letting the scraps fall into the street below.

Some light still remained in the sky, and by it Andy saw a dull gray motor-truck silently approaching. Its top dropped far over the front; its dashboard rose high to meet that depending top; between these, crouched over the steering-wheel, his eyes hidden by goggles, his face just peeping from an enfolding scarf, sat a grimy, stolid Cochin-Chinaman, the

driver; through the open rear of the truck, as it passed, Andy caught sight of French soldiers packed inside—from twenty to twenty-five of them. He caught just a sight of them and no more, because another truck nosed on close behind the first one. Then came another. He tired of counting them; looking from north to south, he saw that they resembled a gigantic hooded cobra, crawling from horizon to horizon. The night fell, and, with only tiny lights, they continued passing—passing. Something impended: these were camions, transporting troops from one point of the front to a second.

He could hear them when he went to bed. He had meant, to lie awake, not because of his old fear, but rather to determine why that fear had left him and what was the connection between its departure and his visit to Domrémy, yet he fell fast asleep almost as soon as he lay down.

When his eyes opened, a glance at the phosphorescent face of his wrist-watch told him that time had passed into those still hours of the earliest morning when reason is in abeyance and the primitive susceptibilities and sensitiveness inherited from our earliest forefathers come again to life and power. Outside there was still the muffled roll of camions; inside, as if fanned by the loud breathing of the soldiers, the blue flicker of the odorous lantern fell on rifle-barrels at bed-heads and made them move until they seemed to be shedding streams of blood that ran down to the figures of his comrades couched beneath them.

To right and left, from shadow into shadow, those figures lay in all the grotesque poses of the infinitely weary, like drunkards whose potations have suddenly overcome them. Now and then one tossed and mumbled in his sleep, or addressed somebody that was far away, or cried out as if in helpless terror of something that was drawing near. Those faces which were visible were as the livid faces of children suffering from a wasting disease; all coarseness had gone from them, all the years and the contamination of the years: they were very like children that are ill and know that they are ill.

Andy thought of Sylvia: he told himself that he had been

selfish in his love for her and that his demands exceeded his deserts: he would keep his ideal, but he would be friends with Sylvia and he would never be selfish in his dealings with anybody again. He thought about his mother, and planned to make her happier on his return. About Blunston, and how much he owed him; about Americus, and the woods where the waxen flowers of the May-apple would soon be blooming, and about Colonel Eskessen and Mr. Dickey, and even, kindly, about Minnie Taylor and all his friends in the lovable town. And then he thought of the bare little room in which, that very afternoon, he had felt like falling on his knees, and about her that once prayed there.

Andy prayed. . . .

Somehow, that made him understand these uncouth men who lay snoring around him. He saw, behind all their ribaldry, how fine and brave and generous their spirits were, and how the worst that they showed of themselves was no more than a screen raised by them to protect an ideal too dear for vulgar display. They were not here out of adventure, nor yet, these conscripts, merely from compulsion; one and all, they knew in their laughing but stern souls the tragic greatness of their task: they had come, though they had to come, willingly, to fight for democracy. Their loud complaints were in reality only complaints against impious desecrations of the cause and deadly delays in the sacrifice. Under the assumed coarseness of the hooligan, Andy was reading the epic of the hero.

And he was one of them—oh, not a hero; but a participant in the common endeavor. That obliteration of the individual of which one of them had pretended to grumble: it was what he had needed. He was become a glad atom in a splendid body. He shed his troubles: rather they were shed from him—he had forgotten how to be afraid, even of fear. The Dream had never gone away; now it drew near; the Cause was greater than the sum of its mistakes:

"Thy Kingdom come," prayed Andy.

He had triumphed over himself: so would Democracy triumph over all her enemies.

## XIX

The next morning they told him that Lieutenant Wilson had been transferred and that his place was to be taken by a Lieutenant Garcia. But Andy was indifferent: Sergeant Ryan had grudgingly confessed that he might become a soldier after all.

The endless train of camions passing along the village-street had changed its direction, had become another sort of train; its trucks, too, were gray and traveled slowly, but each of them bore a red cross on its side, and sometimes something crimson ran out of them and left little black spots on the white road—and sometimes he could catch a glimpse of the inside of these French ambulances. But Andy only prayed the harder:

“Thy Kingdom come.”

## CHAPTER XXIII

### SARAH BROWN HEARS NEWS OF HERSELF AND OF HER SON

AMERICUS lay quiet under the spring sunshine. In the larger cities, there was some unrest; talk of a vague exotic called Bolshevism was heard there, and there were meetings at which men of strange names addressed men and women of foreign birth and spoke of setting the world right in a day by setting it free of all the habits of thought to which it had grown accustomed; but elsewhere, on farms where the tillers were making fortunes from high food-prices, in death-producing mills of toadstool growth wherein the toilers received large pay that they could not save, labor, at least, was more than content: it was jubilant. The thought that the costs, which were always raised a little while after the wages, must some time remain after the wages declined, occurred to few. The people at large, and especially such towns as Americus, were doing well.

Miss Hattie Lloyd's sharp red nose and sharp white chin went poking into each home; whenever bad news was received, she was the first to know it outside of the family immediately affected. Industrial contentment did not interest her, and she only hugged herself the tighter under the spring-time sun.

To-day she passed Mr. Dickey on the corner—"Not doin' s'well as he might," she reflected—and hugged her way into the Red Cross rooms in the Tidd house. There were a great many uniformed women there, who looked up in surprise at this unusual visitor.

Young Mrs. Bolingbroke bounced from among them.

"Miss Hattie," she said, "you can't come in unless you get a uniform. We'll be glad to have you work here, but you've got to wear a uniform. Those are the rules from national

headquarters, and national headquarters are a branch of the United States Government, and so are we."

"Thanks," said Miss Hattie; "I only came to give you these socks." From beneath her shawl, she forthwith produced a pair, which Mrs. Ralph accepted. "I guess you've got enough help without me," she concluded.

"We need all we can get," said Mrs. Ralph. She spoke for the benefit of Minnie Taylor and her other deferential abigails, who were gathered round her so as to lose no word she uttered.

Miss Hattie cocked her head. "Then why don't you bring Sarah Brown here, Mrs. Bolingbroke? She's got a boy over there, and she's never done a bit of work for the Red Cross, s'far's I can hear."

Mrs. Bolingbroke looked at her visitor with quick suspicion. Caution advised silence, or at most evasion; but the demand of discipline over the surrounding lesser workers was paramount.

"I guess Mrs. Brown'd help," said she, "if she wanted to—and if she doesn't want to, she's a slacker."

Miss Hattie gave herself a delighted squeeze. "Maybe she has some *other* reason."

Minnie Taylor giggled. She giggled out of sheer excitement, but the thought that Sarah might have talked of her visit to the Red Cross rooms and of what had happened there set Mrs. Bolingbroke aflame.

"Did Sarah Brown tell you anything about me?" she demanded. "Because if she did, she lied!"

"Mercy me!" cried Miss Hattie. "I didn't know I was stirring up a hornet's nest. Sarah tell me anything? What about, Mrs. Bolingbroke?"

"Never mind what!" Mrs. Ralph saw that she had walked into a trap. "What you don't know can't hurt you. Now then, Miss Hattie, we're much obliged to you for these socks, but we've got to get back to work. Come on, girls."

## II

Miss Hattie walked directly to Blunston, whom she found at his old house, on the back-porch that used to be a front one. He rose at her coming, rather bewilderedly.

"Here's a red-winged blackbird . . ." he began. He indicated the end of the big yard. "I was just watching . . ." To himself he was saying: "Miss Hattie! Who next?"

"Good morning, Andrew," said Miss Hattie. "No thanks, I won't sit down."—He had not offered her a chair.

"Yesterday," he said, "I thought I saw an indigo-bunting, but it's early for. . . ."

"I came to see you about Sarah Brown," said Miss Hattie.

"Mrs. Brown? . . . Me?" Really!

"Yes." She told him something of her suspicions: she had a compelling way of presenting suspicions; she had practice. "It's my idea," she concluded, "the Tollens pride's gone a little too far this time. Sarah's just cheating herself out of money she needs. I'm sure she needs it. I want you to go with me to see her. I want a witness."

Blunston attempted remonstrance.

"If you don't go with me, I'll have to go alone," said Miss Hattie. "For I will go."

So she captured him. Blunston represented to himself that he accompanied her in order to make the interview easier for Sarah.

### III

Whether he succeeded is doubtful. Andy's mother received them in her parlor with its marble-top center-table, its photographs of Andy as a baby and Andy in uniform, and seated them in chairs that were relics of the Tollens' departed glory. She had slipped off her apron, but there were bright smudges on her black sleeves: she had been regilding, with Andy's paints from up-stairs, the chandelier that Andy always liked to keep bright.

Blunston made a timid beginning, but Miss Hattie cut him short. She repeated her recent conversation with Mrs. Ralph.

Sarah turned pale. "What else did Mrs. Bolingbroke say?"

"Besides calling you a slacker and a liar? What more do you want, Sarah?"

"I don't think Mrs. Bolingbroke has a right to talk about *me*."



"Certainly," Blunston hurriedly agreed. "Only of course we ought to remember, she really does a lot of good and so on and. . . ."

"She always lets the whole town know it when she does do good," sniffed Miss Hattie. "What was it she thought you'd told, Sarah?"

Sarah compressed her lips and did not answer.

Blunston made a restless movement. He felt absurdly placed: "But, Miss Hattie. . . ."

"I've come here to tell Sarah something for her own good, and I mean to do it. Sarah, I happened to be in Doncaster a while ago, and I went to the court-house. It was something about deeds. How did your poor father come to lose that Tidd place?"

Sarah stood up. "I can't talk about that." Her face was very firm. "I'm surprised you asked me."

"But, Sarah—"

"Yes, you think it's for my own good, I know. I'm the best judge of what's good for me. I can't talk about it, and I won't."

Miss Hattie made remonstrances, she made fresh beginnings; but Sarah always blocked her before she ever made, in full, a complete statement of the case. Moreover, Andy's mother had Blunston as an ally; he came out of his distress definitely to side with her against the probing of what he conceived a secret wound. In the end, Miss Hattie had to go away unsatisfied.

On the door-step, she turned on him.

"There's something very queer. I can tell that by Sarah's not letting me talk. She's a perfect fool—and you're a perfect fool, too!"

Blunston was glad to be rid of her. He walked alone down Elm Avenue. As he passed the telegraph-office, the operator came to the door and called to him:

"Cable for you, Mr. Blunston. I was just going to send it down."

Blunston opened the proffered envelope:

"Bond declared forfeit have insured life to protect make it easy but tell mother have enlisted."

## IV.

Minnie, released from her labors for the Red Cross, undulated upon him as he stood there with the bit of yellow paper in his trembling hand.

"Good morning, Mr. Blunston," she dimpled. "Any news from Andy?"

Blunston's fist closed on the cable-message.

"No," he said; "no news."

Whenever they thus met, Minnie, on the strength of her single call at the Blunston house, had been treating him as a privileged friend.

"We don't hear much from our boys," she said, "and I guess we never will hear much good of some of them."—It was only the other day she had had her disconcerting morning with Chrissy.—"You remember the parade and all for that Shuman fellow. Well, I hear he's a *case*. I never could see why we made such a fuss over just a private soldier, anyhow."

Blunston's grave eyes were fixed on something far off.

"You couldn't?" he said.

"No; and to hear him go on, you'd think nobody but the soldiers were helping win the war. He starts back to-day. I don't know a girl that's not in the Red Cross, or the Emergency Aid, or something. Between you and I, Mr. Blunston, some soldiers make me tired."

"Soldiers . . .," said Blunston. The sign that hung in front of the Philadelphia Shoe Store needed repainting: this was the first time he had noticed it.

"Everybody goes on about soldiers, no matter what sort of family they come from, like they were just grand. I'm sure the army wasn't so nice to General Wood. I hate the old war! What *do* you hear from Andy, Mr. Blunston?"

Her second mention of the boy's name pulled him up. "Not much, Miss Taylor; not a great . . ."

He raised his hat and was off.

Minnie stared after him.

"Why," she said, "he's turned back the way he came!"

## V

Blunston's walk was long, but he knew that it could have only one ending. After an hour's tramping on back streets, he returned to Elm Avenue, made a purchase at the Racket Store and then went back, with his wrapped purchase in his hand, to "the Brown house." While he waited for Sarah to answer his summons, he saw a three-star service-flag in the window of a small house opposite and, under the flag, the rest of its story, a sign: "For Rent."

"Drew?" Sarah was startled at his reappearance.

"Yes," he said, "I'm here again. May I . . ."

She took him into the parlor. Neither sat down.

"I'm sorry Miss Hattie had to . . ."

"You didn't come here to talk about Miss Hattie," said Sarah.

"No. I—I have some news. . . ."

He handed her the parcel. She unfastened it; her fingers calmly mastered its knots. She unfolded a silk service-flag that bore a single star.

A faint touch of color came into her sallow cheeks. Her lips tightened as they had tightened under Miss Hattie's questioning. But all that she said was:

"He's enlisted?"

Blunston bowed.

"When?"

"I got a cable. . . . It was late—about five days." He caught something in her face. "But that's *all* it means: enlistment. He'll have weeks and weeks of training. . . . It was splendid of him. I know just how he felt." The old longing beat over the iron-gray head of the former war-correspondent. "How I wish I was there!"

"If it was right," said Sarah, "I'm glad."

"Oh, it was! We need every man."

"There was something the matter with his heart once."

"That must be all right now. There's the same medical-examination there. . . . He'll come back . . ."

It was as if, by doing the braver thing, Andy had done that which would remove the danger she once voiced: there was quick flame in the glance she flung at Blunston: "Of *course* he'll come back!"

". . . stronger than ever," Blunston concluded. She had always understood his ellipses; that she failed this once showed an emotion nothing else betrayed.

"The war will be over before August," said Sarah. Her will to end it rang in her voice.

Blunston took her hard hand. He saw for the hundredth time how the years had changed her, but he saw, crowning her care and her weariness, a coronet of nobility, the mask of that hardest conquest, the conquest of deserved adversity. What she saw was a man now visibly past the height of his powers, a man to-day beginning the descent of the hill—and, for the first time, she saw, at this long last, just what his sacrifice had been; what his ambition and his triumph over it; what, in a word, he had done for her boy. There could be no thought of love between them, but there and then from that handclasp was born to them something that, in no small sense, was finer.

"You'd better go now," said Sarah.

"Yes," he said, "I'd better go."

She went with him to the door.

"I know," he said, "why you called him 'Andrew.' It was good. . . ."

"I never called him 'Drew,'" she said.

## VI

She hung the silk flag in the window, and the news spread all over town, and Andy was a hero again, and his mother again received light from his glory. "Babe" Campbell congratulated her; everybody congratulated her; for two evenings, her progress along Elm Avenue was triumphal and, though she appeared not to care—appeared all along to have expected

her son's enlistment—she walked with such a carriage that Lawyer Dickey said she was recovering the Sarah Tollens of her youth. Doctor Dawson, who nowadays gave new solemnity to the ninth petition of the Litany, came to call on her and asked her if she wouldn't return to St. Paul's now that Andy's name had an undisputed right on its Roll of Honor, though he, for one, had never doubted its undisputed right there—and whether she wouldn't, please, enter the Red Cross.

"Perhaps I'll come to church, after a while," said Sarah; "but I won't join that club of Mrs. Bolingbroke's."

Far off she saw a stretch of land beaten hard and torn and torn again. She could smell the black smoke that hung over it. She could see the lurid spurt of flame that clove the smoke and hear the scream of the shells. There were men there, men in dirty uniforms, men lunging at one another with gleaming bayonets, madmen bleeding. . . .

"I don't know just what to say to you," she wrote Andy in a labored letter that the military post promptly lost; "except that I'm glad you've done it, if what you've done is what you think is right. I want you to do your duty, Andy. Be sure you *keep on* doing it now; but I know my boy always will. I'll be all right. You mustn't worry about me. I'm glad you've done what you think is right. God bless you."

As she posted this note, she said to herself:

"I bore him. And I sent him, too: if I'd have asked him not to go in the first place, my red-headed boy'd have stayed at home with me. I sent him. I'm proud of that.—And so far, this time, I haven't cried."

## CHAPTER XXIV

IN WHICH "MY LORD FIGHTETH THE BATTLES OF THE LORD"

THE shrill notes of the reveille shattered the heavy darkness that precedes the dawn. Lights appeared in the village; hob-nailed boots clattered on the cobblestones. There was the hoarse shouting of orders, and the forms of many men, blurred by the night and awkward from sleep and cold, began to come out of houses and barns and to draw together in the street. Word jumped from mouth to mouth among the soldiers that they were going into trenches to relieve a seasoned division for the open fighting in the north.

"Just like the brass-hats to send us where it's qu-quiet," Winters grumbled between his chattering teeth. "They certainly have it in for us!"

"Shut up!" said Flynn. "It's a shot at the Heinies, anyways. Can't ye be t'ankful for small mercies?"

Andy found his place in the rear rank between Chrissly and Campbell. The light of Ryan's flash-lamp showed him Levy, Davies and Johnson. Down the line, it fell successively on Schwartz and Christopoulos, Kozloff and Ibráhím Reshid, the Turk, and on smiling Angelelli. He had a glimpse of Garcia's face, very white, and of Lieutenant Graaberg receiving some rapid instructions from their battery captain.

The time had come, and he was ready for it.

Every man had his kit with him, but there was no inspection. As soon as the reports were made, a repeated order rattled along the ranks, and while it was yet dark they had begun their march.

### II

In the first light of the morning, they passed other regiments, lying on the wet grass behind stacked rifles and waiting for Andy's regiment to precede them.

Davies would call out: "You've got to make room for us!"

"Take a look at me now!" cried Campbell.

And once, one of the men on the grass retorted: "Sure! We won't get another chance."

Everybody that heard him laughed.

"You're the —th, ain't you?" somebody inquired.

Andy nodded.

"I thought so: your colonel dropped his pet louse, and it's green."

"Oh, well," shouted Flynn, "we knew who *you* was by the smell of yez."

They passed ambulances and some artillery, the guns harlequinading in yellow, green and brown. They passed a mile of wagons. The men were overladen; besides, it had rained yesterday, and there were many pounds of water in their uniforms and boots. Before they had made their second rest, and scarcely ten minutes after they were in their proper place in the line, Winters was complaining that he had come to France to fight and not to be walked to death.

They knew the villages they came to by the *plaque* on the first house of each. Sometimes French soldiers cheered them, and girls waved in hysterical gaiety. One that tried to run upon Andy's squad, throwing kisses, Johnson, the cross-eyed corporal, shoved backward so roughly that she fell: Andy's last sight of her showed her on her knees, her lips stiffened in their greeting. Outside of that village they cheered an ambulance that was driven by a pretty Englishwoman in V. A. D. blue. . . .

### III

They crossed at last the borders of desolation. Here was a house the front of which had been blown away: the table was still set, in the dining-room; up-stairs the beds were waiting. There was a main street without so much as one of the dogs that used to frequent it; the grass was growing between the cracks in the paving. The roof, floor and furniture of an old church were dumped into its crypt, and the graves, blasted open, exposed to this twentieth-century war the whitened

skulls of peaceful priests, which had lain in quiet and darkness for hundreds of years. In the largest town along their route, only ten out of five hundred houses remained untorn by shells, and every house that had been hit was uninhabitable. The next place was a mere dust-heap wherefrom, knee-deep in debris, sallow Asiatics raked together bits of brass and iron and collected the leaden house-numbers for conversion into materials of war.

After that the countryside was a plain of pulverized stone, gashed hunks of concrete, acres of deserted trenches and rusted labyrinths of barbed wire. Scarcely ruin remained. Empty dug-outs, yawning mine-craters, deep shell-holes, but not a house, not a tree. The very course of streams had been visibly altered, villages were only names on the officers' maps.

A dog-cart stood by the road and near it three people in civilian clothes. One of the two men might be a small-town doctor, the other had patently been bred to the law, the woman—. Why, she was just a girl, just a girl of eighteen or nineteen—and though Andy had already seen something of grief in this war, he had never seen a face on which such grief was written. It was written so plainly that, taken into consideration with the scene and its other actors, the meaning of the little tragedy was clear: the last of her family, this girl must have lived here all her life until the days of the invasion; she had now returned to find her home, and she could not even pick out the spot where the house once stood.

#### IV

To Andy it seemed a matter of months, that journey to the trenches. The long column had been broken and rejoined and broken again, and marching was but one factor in its progress. The end came, however, and came, for Andy's unit, amid a roar of cannon, with a sudden turn to the left out of a shell-pitted road in the twilight of a long day. Captain Bates said something to Ryan; Ryan passed this word to the corporal, and cross-eyed Johnson told his squad:



"Cut out the gab an' keep your heads down, or you'll be pushing up the daisies to-morrow."

The last sight that Andy had of the outside world included a battery of artillery swinging into the fields beside him, the guns followed by their caissons, each driver mounted and holding the bridle of an off-horse. Near by a medical-unit was converting a rough shed into a hospital; orderlies, beside huge pots of boiling water over the blazing fires, were laying on a clean table a brilliant battalion of forceps, scissors and saws, while around them other orderlies busily unpacked chests of lint, compresses and bandages. The noise of the guns obliterated sound, and it was strange to see all these preparations going on in seeming silence.

"There's our general," said Winters, much as he had said it in camp, and Andy saw the overcoated, soldierly form standing by an old shell-crater as the company went past. The next moment he was in a gulley and slopping through the earth.

They had a mile and a half to go, at long "distances" and in single file, before they reached the third line, and then a thousand yards to the firing-line. On the way, they passed scores of openings into other trenches, and the only assurance that they would not be lost was the presence of a guide from the unit they were relieving, who led the way.

If Andy had any fear, it was that he might be killed in some trivial manner before the hour for fighting arrived. He obeyed orders, therefore, so long as his youthful curiosity permitted; but there came moments when he could no more restrain himself, and when he would rise tiptoe and, without pausing in his journey, look over the top of the communication-trench. On such occasions he was rewarded by nothing except the sight of a vast wasteland from which houses, trees and hedges had all been wiped away and the surface of which shells had churned and churned again.

Horses rotted in rain-pools among broken wagon-wheels and the scraps of shattered camions, but the first dead man that Andy saw lay on the sodden earth close to the trench's edge with a flatness that at once announced his final condi-

tion; a rat was gnawing his cheek and looked at the passers-by without discontinuing his horrible repast. Andy, like his companions, was proceeding with his arms free, his rifle being suspended by its strap from his shoulders, his arms poised to protect him against a fall: once he slipped, and his left hand, flung over the top, clutched something that admitted his finger-tips as if it were jelly; when he recovered his footing, he saw that this something was the decaying face of what had been a French soldier.

## V

"Here's where we live," said Chrissly.

It was a slimy ditch. Andy's feet sank into sucking muck. Because men had inhabited the trench as the animals of a menagerie inhabit their cages, to enter this place was to force one's way through a stench almost tangible. It was just such a trench as that which he had visited in those prehistoric times when he was a war-correspondent. It reeked of death.

Instinctively trying not to lean against the revetment, trying to avoid all contact with the contaminated walls, Andy looked about him. Chrissly was already seated on a more or less dry bit of board, his helmeted head resting against the oozing earth, the chunks of mud that were his boots propped upon the planks that, half afloat, were intended for a footway; Levy was volubly explaining the system of the trenches, about which he knew nothing; big Davies and Winter and the other men of the squad were gazing around them with consternation; Johnson stood by uncertainly, awaiting orders.

Andy mounted the firing-step. He peeped out at a blackened ash-heap cluttered with broken things and deformed, which lay drenched and water-logged. Above, the shells roared; from below rose heavily the odor of human flesh in all the stages of putrefaction.

"You damn fool, keep your head *down*!" Johnson warned.

Chrissly touched Andy on the shoulder and pointed to a hole, the mouth of a tiny cave scooped under the forward wall of the trench:

"And here's where we sleep," he said.

## VI

Well, here he was. It surprised Andy a little at first to see red flashes from across the ash-heap and farther up the line and to realize that fighting was going on there while, for all the hideousness of his part of the trenches, he and his comrades were in comparative quiet: the subjection of his individuality, which was really its extension to include his regiment, his division, had not yet progressed, though it soon did so, to the point where it would include a still larger force. Nevertheless, what was about him was sufficiently grizzly, its potentialities sufficiently imminent. This was not the flag-flung, drum-beating war of which he used to read; it was an unbelievable intensification of the war of which he had once tried to write; it embraced such chances as crouching in muck until a meaningless piece of shell carried off one's nose, blew one's face away, left one alive and a shape of repulsion.

He had wondered what ugly shape the German soldiers would assume when he saw them. Now he wondered if he would ever see a German soldier. He devoutly prayed that, if he did, the man would not cry "Kamerad" when there were orders to take no prisoners.

But he knew that he would never be afraid again.

## VII

He had been there an entire day before he had familiarized himself with the maze of the trenches, for they were a stinking warren of which every part was like every other, and he argued with Flynn that a man would be a fool to try to run away in them, because no man could tell whether he were going forward or back. Their former occupants had given them names, and to the communication-trenches these held, but those of the front line proper were numbered, in that sector, from left to right. The duty of the occupants, who were divided into shifts, was to remain on watch, to report any suspicious movement observed in No Man's Land and to pick off any head that showed itself above the opposite mole-ridges that were the works of the enemy.

The quarters were close. Whenever anybody passed, the men, unless congregated in an "elbow," had to press themselves tight against the revetments to make way for him, and this enforced propinquity led to frequent quarrels. If a soldier broke his watch, he would nearly cry over the accident and then loudly blame his neighbor. Just beyond the far edge of the pit, a dead man lay, and there was a long squabble as to whether the body should be dragged in and buried and if so whose duty it was; when Andy volunteered, the arm of the corpse came off as he pulled at it.

Dawn always appeared grudgingly, as if dreading the sure renewal of the titanic noises that used to cease to a portentous silence for an interval beginning at three o'clock. The morning seemed hesitant, the sun, if there were the rarity of clear weather, sickening at the thought of what it must see, battling weakly with the sulphurous smoke-wreaths, below which rolled sluggish waves of mist and animal-gasses generated in the fatal swamp. One has said that nothing could live out there, and yet many optimistic robins, long accustomed to the guns, were ever ready to welcome the day. Their first flutter was as a signal: the stridor of the artillery would immediately recommence, and its mad bellowings, its deafening shrieks continue until reason tottered. The men would think that they could bear them not an instant longer—and would bear them. Not cowardice, but a revolt of the auditory nerves, which seemed no longer controllable—and would be controlled. It was quite as Chrissy had once described it; but Chrissy had since discovered, and now imparted, the sole method of quelling that reprising: one must center one's attention on the course of each shell, must determine on which side it was passing and try to occupy the mind with its character.

Andy and his companions, cramped in the muddy trench, were no longer the soldiers of tradition. They were so wrapped in fold after fold of all the clothes in their kit, and of all the rags to be ravished from the outlying dead, that every man was twice his natural breadth. Other care of the person was impossible; their hands became filthy claws, their beards grew rank, their faces were often unrecognizable

because of the dirt upon them. The recurring need for gas-masks constantly curtailed conversation, and their three relaxations were watching the battles of aircraft and anti-aircraft guns, taking pot-shots at the enemy—a sport that did not commend itself as sportsmanlike to Andy—or stirring the Germans to a fusillade by firing one themselves, and finally eating the rough fare that the cooks brought out to them under a rain of lead. When a man crouched alone in the slime and looked at the damp wall directly ahead of him, it was certain that he envisaged there some picture of somebody at home.

The long nights were little better than the long days; the night was not much more than the day with complete darkness added. Threatening shadows stalked in No Man's Land, flares and star-shells only gave the distorted an increased distortion. Preying creatures made noises that were mistaken for the first signs of an attack. In the dug-out the air was so foul that Flynn said only the activities of the vermin kept one active enough to combat asphyxiation.

Most of the squad became superstitious: you must not light three cigarettes from one match; you must never tighten your helmet's chin-strap after putting the helmet on; you must always avoid the numbers 4, 8 and 13. A dull disease laid hold of two or three of the men, a fever that came and went, leaving a dragging lassitude; everybody developed a dirt-rash. Andy was weakened by a cold, and Davies successfully disputed with Chrissy the privilege of taking the lad's hour on guard, while Winters lent him a sweater and went over the seams of his blouse with a lighted candle, burning body-lice.

"It's hell here," said Winters. "In Gawd's name, why don't they let us go over the top?"

Levy had a plan for a raid that would necessarily prove successful, but Flynn found this virtue in the life: that it left small leisure for regretting one's past. The squad's first casualty was in the case of Campbell, who put his careless head above the trench-top, had his cigarette shot from his lips and then, as he peevishly complained of that loss, received a neck-wound which sent him, dripping blood, to the rear.

One day, just as Andy's cold was better, letters arrived—their first since leaving the camp—and the delight of the lucky was as keen as the disappointment of the unfortunate. Chrissly was angry because his letter came not from Léonie, but from Minnie, who, now that he was again overseas, had decided to veil her chagrin in one more effort at recapture. The former Amishman's reply was brief:

"DEAR MINNIE:

"Thanks fer your letter. Don't write again.

"CHRISSLY."

For Andy there was no letter at all.

### VIII

He did his guard-turn that night, but he was very tired and still weak from his illness. He could scarcely keep his heavy head poised before the loop-hole. It would sink toward the support of the parapet; his eyelids were like pieces of metal. He welcomed every star-shell because it prodded him to wakefulness. The tobacco had given out, and, although normally a light smoker, he longed for a cigarette as a man that has for a day had no water longs for a drink. He fell to thinking of Americus and of what the awakening woods must be like now. He thought of the Sylvia of his early dreams and of how he came here. He considered his course absolutely consistent: placed as he had been, his first duty was to tell the people at home of the abuses that were threatening their men with death and their cause with defeat; when that course was impassably barred to him, his next duty was enlistment. He had done it and had no regrets.

Somebody struck him roughly on the shoulder.

"Keep your damned eyes to that hole, Brown. What the hell's the matter with you?"

It was Garcia; he was a wan scorbutic figure. Andy said:

"I'm sorry, sir. It won't happen again."

"You were asleep," said Garcia. His voice showed malice.

Andy had not been asleep, and he knew that Garcia knew it. "No, sir," he said.

"Don't contradict me. I could have you shot for sleeping at your post."

Andy said nothing.

"For two cents, I'd do it," Garcia pursued. "It's thanks to you I'm out here."

McGregor's letters had said nothing of this, but Andy guessed a little of how he had influenced Garcia's transference from Paris, and he knew that the work of a front-line intelligence-officer included scouting in No Man's Land, which was no pleasant job. He watched Garcia as the lieutenant passed on, with regret. He had no hunger for vengeance.

## IX

By this time, everybody, even Flynn, fretted for action. They all wanted to try a raid.

"Ain't we *ever* goin' to get a chance?" demanded tow-headed Winters. He looked at the thunderous skies, but he addressed the distant staff, and he voiced the plea of the entire line.

All sorts of silly rumors came to them from nowhere. Now they were depressed by the certainty that events were going badly in the north; now encouraged by some trifle, which they took as an indication that they were to be permitted a raid. After the first novelty of the trenches and its horror had somewhat abated, they talked of their coming term in billets; but this talk had waned before the growing appetite for hand-to-hand battle. What was the good of staying here to be shelled and not doing anything in return? They did not reckon with the fact that their own artillery, although hampered by an ammunition-famine, was serving the Germans something of what the German artillery was serving them.

Andy's squad appeared to be pointedly neglected. Nightly, other groups took off their identification-disks—men not nearly so good, said Johnson, as his men—and crawled out into a No Man's Land across which machine-guns could throw

their shots three ways at one time. Some of these scouting-parties had lost their course, got into the enemy's trenches and yet returned safe. Now and then a man was killed, and more often men were wounded. There was a fellow in the scorned C Company that had lain for twenty-four hours in a shell-hole, but come in safe. Still another that Andy laughed at for his jack-in-the-box antics as he darted hither and yon was shot through the head before the watchers realized the danger of his position. Yet all these things happened to other people: there was talk in the squad of executing a raid of their own.

"Perhaps the Boche'll come after *us*," Andy suggested.

"They can't," explained Levy. "They need all the men they can spare up the line. That's why we ought to try a raid."

"They haven't got the nerve to come after *us*," said Winters.

There was a night when they heard a queer whimpering sound outside the trench. Something was dragging itself toward them, wriggling along on its back, a foot at a time. A German star-shell showed it to be a German soldier frightfully mangled. German machine-guns put an end to him.

## X

Then something happened. The whole section of the horizon opposite burst into flame. Hundreds of guns poured out shells that fell a short distance behind the line of trenches of which Andy's trench was a part. The noise was appalling, the heat terrible. It kept on and on. The cooks could not bring up food, the rear could not send up reinforcements. Orders were shouted, but they could not be heard; they were obeyed simply because the men knew what orders must, in such an event, be given. This was a barrage-prelude to a raid.

The squad donned its masks against shell-gas and, bayonnetted rifles in hand, leaped at the peep-holes and watched the fiery panorama: spurts of light, vast fans of flame, long shafts of redness. The roar shook everything; though his body was wet with sweat, Andy's eyes felt like red-hot marbles; he risked lifting his gas-mask to drink from his canteen, but



water was one of the things that could not now reach here: the canteen was empty.

A new line of fire developed. Beginning close to the mole-trails of the enemy, it advanced toward the American lines.

Chrissy pointed. It was as if he said:

"They're back of that. They're coming!"

Through the flames, Andy could see them coming: a line of men in extended order. They would fall to the ground; he thought them all shot down; but they rose immediately and came farther forward.

Something that was not sweat added to the dampness of Andy's forehead. He felt no pain—a fragment of shrapnel had torn away a shred of his scalp—but he bound his handkerchief around his head. His overcoat, sweater and blouse were off. So were those of the other men, silhouetted at their posts about him. Their open shirts showed to those nearest them the workings of their throats.

American machine-guns rattled from near-by nests; but the Germans continued advancing. From the next trench a man staggered into Andy's and fell sprawling there, his mask shot off, his eyeballs protruding, his twisted mouth making sounds that could reach nobody's ears save his own. There was no time to help him, and he was beyond help. A shrapnel-shell broke over that end of the trench, and, in the light of a coincident flare, the man died with an expression on his face like that on the face of a child who does not know why it is being punished.

Andy turned back at the loop-hole; but the enemy were tumbling into the trench.

They were all about him. The pit had become a swirling mass of men. Everybody was fighting. You might be fighting your comrade, but you had to fight.

A great hulk of a man was lunging at Andy's abdomen. Andy's rifle parried the thrust; his bayonet passed through the fellow's neck. He wrenched it out and wheeled to meet another lunge from another quarter; he pressed the trigger of his rifle without bringing—as indeed there was neither time

nor space to do—the butt to his shoulder, and this second enemy fell. A figure with a flashing knife leaped upon him; Andy closed and grappled; together the pair rolled in the mud amid feet that kicked and trampled on them. . . .

## XI

“Cut it out! Cut it out! You’re wasting ammunition.”

Andy realized that he was lying maskless across the parapet and shooting with what must be a German rifle, at nothingness. Johnson was tugging at his belt and, because he came down without a twinge, he knew that he was unhurt. Flares were still constant, and he looked on a horrid picture.

Faces up and faces down, crouching, twisting, outspread, bodies lay about in a tangled heap. Here was one with its legs bent impossibly under it, there one the head of which was wrenched completely around on its broken neck. Nearly all wore German uniforms; most showed their teeth; in the midst of them was extended the corpse of Winters, his two hands hiding his face.

Andy’s first thought was one of horror that he had helped in this slaughter, his next clear realization of its necessity. Then he bent over tow-headed Winters: that soldier had been bayonetted through the chest; the blade was still in the wound, the attached rifle sagging after it. Andy withdrew the hands to close the eyes. The face, he found, was calm; it had the dignity of one that has lucidly given all that is his to give.

Save a few of the enemy’s dead, nobody was masked now; most masks had been ripped away in the hand-to-hand fighting, and, as soon as the raid ended, it was discovered that gas had played no part in it. The men shouted joyously to one another and clapped one another on the shoulders; they exchanged loud narratives and inquiries, congratulations and commiserations.

Winters’ was the only death in the squad, and there was miraculously no serious wound save in the case of big Davies. Too weak to move, the man that had done guard-duty for Andy sat staunching a profusely bleeding thrust in his left

shoulder and placidly waiting the stretcher-bearers. Chrissly had some superficial cuts that his friends' first-aid kits repaired; Levy's knee was sprained, and a gun-butt had raised a large welt on Johnson's forehead. Untouched Flynn was saying:

"Sure but they're not any good at all! They never fazed me—not a wan ov 'em." He wrung Andy's hand—he who had once knocked him down: "You're a rale scrapper, Brownie. I watched you while I was bitin' this fellow's thumb off." He nodded to a man beside him; he spat. "Fough, but he tastes bad!" said Flynn.

For Flynn had taken the only prisoner. The fellow was nursing his bitten hand, but doing so with a face that showed considerable satisfaction with his lot. He was a young blond man; he might have been one of the waiters in the New York roof-garden whither Blunston had taken Andy in the long-ago. Andy had wondered what German soldiers would look like: they looked like anybody else.

Levy explained, while none listened, just why the raid was a failure. Chrissly went over Andy for signs of a wound. Davies, while he waited for the stretcher, gasped:

"Wasn't it a fine fight, though? . . . I'll betcha we put up the best fight around here!"

Then they all fell to talking about Winters:

"Got it right in the chest."

"That's hard luck, that is."

"Remember how he was always kickin' for a real fight? He wouldn't call this anything!"

"Poor old Winters."

"Must 'a' died right off—no pain, you know."

"Flynn got the fellow that got him; didn't you, Flynn?"

"He was a regular fellow, Winters was."

No one looked at the body a second time. When Johnson, who had gone to get news from the neighboring trenches, returned with Sergeant Ryan, they said: "Winters is dead."

"You knowed Winters got his, didn't you?"

Cross-eyed Johnson, the former factory-foreman, uttered something strangely like a sob. Then he swore lustily.

"Shut up," he said. "'Course I know it. He was the best of the lot of you."

Ryan said: "Schwartz is dead. Kozloff'll lose his right arm."

## XII

When dusk fell, Lieutenant Graaberg came cheerfully among them and dispensed news to greet which they coined new oaths of satisfaction.

Johnson dealt out hand-grenades; watches were set. Ryan passed through the trenches with a basket of carrier-pigeons. They were to return the Germans' raid in kind.

## CHAPTER XXV

### HOW ANDY WENT "OVER THE TOP"

IT SEEMED as if the zero-hour would never come. The men, who had studied the maps and had their instructions by heart, cursed softly. The day had been clear, but it was a damp night, and the spring air was still cold. When one rose, his joints cracked. Each again and again went covertly over his rifle and bayonet; there was more attention paid to offensive weapons than to defensive. Somebody was always looking at his watch and thinking it had stopped; the soldiers crowded one another at the peep-holes out of which there was for long nothing to be seen but slowly eddying clouds of mist.

Levy proffered his hand to Flynn. "So long," he said.

"Aw, go to hell wid yez!" said Flynn; but he said it with a brusqueness not unkindly.

At last, Andy, looking directly eastward, saw, or thought he saw, not the dawn, but a faint lessening of the darkness there. Lieutenant Graaberg, who had been standing in the elbow, walked quietly away.

Then the American artillery opened fire.

It was like the night before last, but the shells were less numerous and were "departures," not "arrivals."

As they were putting on their gas-masks, Chrissly said:

"I don't sink it'll be much of a barrage. One o' them first-aid fellers as come fer Winters tol' me Washington cabled as we was usin' too many shells."

Johnson, with picturesque oaths, told him to shut up.

They were to follow the advancing barrage and not to be afraid of running into it; they were assured that it would precede them and that a smoke-screen would also go ahead of them. As a matter of fact, neither as they stood poised nor later, did any one of them think again about the barrage. . .

## II

They leaped clear of the parapet. In front of them, as they ran, went that curtain of fire.

Andy heard, distinct in the ensuing pandemonium, German machine-gun bullets rattling like hail on the debris of No Man's Land, beating against broken wood and distorted metal, lacerating, doubtless, the unwincing bodies of the long dead. What he felt was only a great exultation, a high joy. He felt the capacity for sacrifice. Once he had a quick vision of the parlor at home and of his mother in it. There was a strange second when so incongruous a strain as that of the Pan-pipes in Gounod's *Au Printemps* seemed interwoven with the raucous screech of a shell; there was a stranger when one of the running forms ahead of him took on the bright likeness of a Maid in armor with a flashing sword in her outstretched hand.

The ground was dangerously rent; he fell many times. A German "crump" shattered the earth close by. The hurtling column from the American trenches seemed futilely few. The soldier nearest in advance of him had no helmet—he had no head—had only a spouting neck—toppled over: something splashed over Andy's hands.

At arm-signals from their leaders, whom only those signals distinguished as leaders, the men threw themselves to the earth. At other signals, they sprang up and dashed on over the shell-torn surface and under the crackling sky. Andy passed a hooded figure clutching its breast with a dripping claw and reeling back to their front line; he wrenched his side in a sudden endeavor to avoid setting his heel on the upturned, maskless face of the Macedonian Christopoulos, who, dying in the glare of a star-shell, looked more than ever Italian.

Now they were in a tearing maze of barbed-wire, which robbed the dead of their rightful couches and entangled the living. Something—who knew?—had prevented the demolition of that maze and was now stopping the barrage; but of this there was no time to think, nor was there any time to think of scratches; only to fight and go forward.

And then they were there.

Andy was looking down into a trench along which gray forms ran—the forms of men with empty hands raised in the instinct to protect their heads. They ran among flashes and explosions, for other men were throwing bombs among them, and the smoke of each explosion was followed by a chorus of piteous yells. He was conscious of a grizzled man, one moment flattening himself against the farther trench-wall, his fists pressed to his eyes; the next, and that man was a pulp of shredded flesh and shattered bone. Legs and arms lay in the mud.

His stomach heaved. He was saved by a spasm of resistance on the part of a platoon of Germans that rushed out from the next trench. There were two or three minutes of bayonetting.

### III

Then, at least in the point in the line toward which Andy and his immediate comrades had delivered their attack, the raid was over. It was victorious, and Andy and his fellows were in the trench carelessly waving masks and helmets over their defenseless heads.

It was a shambles. Here a soldier with a quiet face lay, a little black hole between his closed eyes, with his hair among the gushing bowels of the bomb-torn corpse of a lieutenant. There were silent men bleeding to death from wounds that had lopped away hands or feet. A sergeant was curled in the muck of a corner holding his boot and looking stupidly at the severed foot that was in it. Against the firing-board, a dark man in a drenched shirt was propped; the last agony had extended all his limbs at ridiculous angles and on his lolling face there was the grin of a buffoon.

Of all people in the world, terrible First Sergeant Ryan was patting Andy on the shoulder:

“Damn good work,” he was saying. “I saw you put two of them out of business up there.”

Andy had not the slightest recollection of the act. He was about to say so when Ryan turned to Angelelli, to whom the

carrier-pigeons had, it appeared, been entrusted. It was Angelelli's duty to release them with a message giving news of their success before the men themselves returned.

"Did you send those birds?" asked Ryan.

Angelelli smiled assent.

"Damn it all, you oughtn't have done that till we'd identified this Boche unit here!"

"Me, I identify it alla myself," Angelelli grinned. "An' I write heem: 'I'm tired a-carryin' dees damma pidge'."

#### IV

There had, of course, been no idea of holding the trench. The raid was made for the purpose of identification referred to by Ryan, and, the officers accomplishing this, as quick a return as possible was imperative. The artillery's work had been exact, but its lack of shells had compelled a fatal brevity; to remain for more than the fewest essential minutes would be to court death or capture. Little battles were engaging the trenches to right and left of them, but Andy's unit seemed no sooner to have attained their objective than they began scaling the top to depart from it. Andy and Chrissy were, however, the last to leave, the former having stopped to do what he could for the German sergeant, the latter to tie to his belt a German helmet intended for Léonie.

They all reached the top and started back. A second later they were in a whirl of fighting with a bunch of gray men that amazingly came upon them from up the line.

Andy's bayonet broke in the first antagonist against whom he used it. He was aware of his comrades darting by him. He was aware that, obedient to instructions to take no unnecessary risks, he was following them. Then the heavens fell, and the earth opened, and there was oblivion. . . .

All this occurred during one of twenty-four hours concerning which the official communiqué announced that there was "nothing of importance to report" from Andy's sector.



## V.

Andy was sure, as soon as he came to himself, that, sore as he was, he had not been badly injured, and he made this assurance doubly sure by stretching first one arm and then the other, one leg and then the other, and by going over himself with his hands without budging more than he had to in the puddle in which he lay. It was only when he had finished his examination that he began to express interest in the puddle.

The puddle was black, and it stank. It occupied the bottom, the rather cramping bottom, of a circular cavity that was a good deal greater in diameter at the top. The sides were of scraped gray clay.

Andy lay still for a while. He was horribly thirsty, but he would not drink of the filth in which he perforce wallowed. He looked at his watch: it had indeed stopped. Overhead raged the now familiar cacophony of battle, but he knew enough of battle to distinguish its day from its night, and, judging from the prevailing light, or, rather, the obtaining degree of darkness, he decided that the hour must be about two of an afternoon. Cautiously and slowly, because such an act might be dangerous, and was, to his bruised and stiffened body, painful, he raised himself, his belly against the cavity's sides, to a point from which he could just look over the top.

Special landmark there was none, but he could tell that he was somewhere about the center of No Man's Land and that the German trenches were in the direction in which he was then gazing. Evidently, he had been knocked over by the shock of some explosion, had dazedly made a break toward his own lines and had stumbled, at the same instant, into unconsciousness and this shell-hole. He had escaped drowning simply by virtue of falling in such a manner that his head was out of water.

He must wait for the real night.

In the agonies of thirst he waited. There were hours of torture. There were long minutes when he debated whether it would not be better to drink of the poisonous liquid about

him, and other and yet longer minutes when he thought it simplest to rush for his trenches at once and so to die. His tongue lolled from his mouth, a rough dry thing. He fought, not always a winning fight, against delirium. Death seemed a very little matter to bother about, but because it appeared easy, he felt it wrong to seek death. He argued, in McGregor's words, but to a nobler purpose, that a dead soldier was of no good to his country, that he must preserve his life now if only to lose it usefully. Even into his madness he carried the resolution of remaining where he was until nightfall.

At nightfall he set out.

At first he went in a stooping posture, dropping flat whenever a flare or a star-shell illuminated the horrors over which he blundered and revealed the waste to the unsleeping snipers and machine-gunners. Soon worn out by this, he began to go on all fours. In a little while he was crawling like a wounded snake. His course lay among the carcasses of men, the spatter of bullets, the detonations of shells; it lay among blasted tree-stumps and broken posts, over pieces of barbed-wire, wheels, shot-riddled helmets, rotting accouterments—all the unsalvageable wreckage of war. The earth was as full of holes as a Sweitzer cheese. It was necessary to climb and crawl into and out of holes waist deep here and there so large that a fair-sized house could be hidden in them. The soil had been turned over again and yet again. Not only was it now unlike what it had been a month ago, but a month ago it was utterly unlike what it had been thirty days before that; what was now a hillock was yesterday a shell-hole, and that which was to-day a crater would, a week hence, be a mound.

Andy became heedless of the shells. He became heedless of the passage of time. Having once headed toward the American lines, he thought no more of direction. He was crazy with thirst, he was hungry, he was sore from the battle, he was stiff from his night in the fetid pool. His arms would sometimes refuse to drag his body forward, his toes to push it an inch farther. Once or twice he fainted, but by the time he had recovered consciousness, purpose had triumphed over

fatigue; with the energy with which he had once pursued his course against the censorship for the enlightenment of his public, with the determination with which he later undertook his new duties, he kept on crawling. . . .

## VI

It was Chrissly that dragged him into the trench—against overwhelming chances, he had somehow come back to the very trench from which he set out twenty-four hours earlier.

"I been out in No Man's Land lookin' fer you," said Chrissly, "an' near got arrested fer it. I been lookin' fer you efferywheres. Where was you, anyhow?"

Andy's tired heart thumped with gratitude, but his crackling tongue could not forbear an answer:

"Over to the Hotel Americus for a glass of beer. Where'd you suppose?"

Chrissly wanted to send him to hospital, but Andy wouldn't hear of it: he only fainted. It was not until daylight that he would consider leaving.

Then a lieutenant passed along the line, consulting captains regarding men commanded by them. He held his breath, thrust his head into Andy's dug-out and called:

"Private Andrew McK. Brown!"

Andrew painfully came out. He sleepily saluted.

"Want leave?" asked the strange lieutenant.

"No, sir."

The officer showed his amazement. "You don't?"

"No, sir."

"Well, you've got to take it. Captain Bates recommends you for a week at a rest-camp."

"If you please, sir, I'd like to stay with my company."

"Your regiment goes back to billets to-morrow, anyhow. You're recommended for—for"—he consulted a note-book—"for good work in a trench-raid, two nights ago."

"Where is the rest-camp?" asked Andy.

"Dunno," said the lieutenant. "Get your kit together and report to Captain Bates."

## CHAPTER XXVI

JUST A CHAPTER TO BE SKIPPED BY EVERYBODY THAT DOESN'T  
CARE ABOUT LOVE

ANDY dipped his manicured fingers into the scented finger-bowl and wiped them with his damask napkin. Then he leaned back in his deep chair, stretched his long legs well under the recently laden table and heaved the sigh of the healthy young man that has eaten a little more than is good for him. He lit one of his host's pet cigars and, out of a far-tilted head, blew a thin spiral of smoke straight heavenward: it was like the smoke of a thank-offering.

"It certainly is good to be here," he said.

"Here," as may easily be imagined, was a beautifully appointed private dining-room.

"And it's good to see you again, too," Andy added.

"Are you sure you mean that?" McGregor asked.

He eyed Andy with the jealous gaze of genuine affection. Himself in evening-clothes and sufficiently invigorated by half a bottle of M. Ledaire's best Burgundy, the little contractor thought that Andy's military experiences had done the boy no end of good. If Andy's clean uniform told of a slight loss of weight, it was equally explicit about a gain of muscle, and the freckled face of its wearer had the glow of an athlete.

Until that afternoon, Andy had long been what seemed a great way from McGregor. They had met in Aix only toward the end of Andy's leave, because, during the larger part of it, the contractor was in another portion of the country.

"Good to see you?" repeated Andy. "You bet it is!"

McGregor showed a slight inclination to press that point,

but this he for the nonce overcame. "The town's cheered you up?"

"It ought to."

"Well, I guess it's an all right place. Of course, they've spoiled it by putting the lid on the roulette-joints, but it's about as all right as such things run over here."

"I'll show you what I think of it," said Andy. He took an unposted letter from his pocket and handed McGregor the first few pages. "Read that," said Andy.

The contractor read:

"DEAREST MOTHER—

"All at the same time and under the same roof:

"Loie Fuller is making an impromptu speech;

"Jim Europe is beating time for a buck-and-wing dance;

"Winthrop Ames (shirt-sleeved) is rehearsing a slap-stick sketch;

"E. H. Sothern has stage-fright;

"The daughter-in-law of an ex-President is doing house-cleaning by hand;

"America's greatest opera-singer is at a piano, leading a bunch of doughboys in 'Beautiful Katie.'

"And the richest woman in New York, wearing a gingham apron, is selling chocolate from behind a counter to a dozen clamoring khaki-men.

"Aix-les-Bains has a rue Roosevelt and a rue Pierrepont Morgan, and it's American. After the trenches, it's heaven, and our fellows all think so, even if they do call it *Aches-and-Pains*.

"I blew in the first of the week and got bathed—hot bathed and barbered—oh, barbered till I smelt a mile!—and slept in a real bed in a real hotel kept by a royal prince that pretends he's only a hotel-keeper called Ledaire.

"Mother, it used to have a population of eight thousand out of season, and in season it had a population five times as large. The rich Englishmen that didn't come to it to play in its magnificent casino, came to it to take its waters, and before the rich Englishmen came the rich Romans. It was a proconsul of the first Cæsar that built the baths—an arch and a temple of Diana are still standing. The two springs yield daily over a million gallons of water at a mean temperature

of 115 degrees, loaded with carbonic and free nitrogen gas, sulphurated hydrogen, hydrophosphates and carbonates of calcium, some chlorides and traces of bromides and iodites.\*

"You may drink the waters or get into them, and it isn't only the people that bathe in Aix—the town itself is washed three times a day."

Many things had happened to Sarah before she received that letter, but she did at last receive it. Blunston thought that it showed the effects of army life on a burgeoning literary style.

## II

McGregor returned the letter to Andy. He made but one comment:

"I'd like to meet your mother."

"You ought to," said Andy. "She's a real mother."

"The best woman in the world, I suppose?"

"None better."

The contractor studied his cigar. "I may get a chance to meet her soon. I haven't much more than another two months' work over here."

"You're not going home?" Andy leaned forward excitedly.

"In about two months, I guess. I've got one big piece of work that'll keep me a while."

"I wish you would look her up—just to say you saw me. Women like that sort of thing, you know."

"Do they? Lately, I've begun to wonder if they knew what they do like."

Andy laughed. "You're not in love?"

"I'm not a fool. You know what the fellow said: 'When a man finds a woman there's nothing too good for, he offers her himself.' I'll never try to trot in double-harness again, my son."

The tokens of some recollection not altogether pleasant

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\* One suspects that Andy looked in the guide-book for that: when he left home, he knew nothing of chemistry.—R. W. K.

passed over Andy's ingenuous face. "But I don't see why *you* talk that way," he said.

"Look here," said McGregor. He tapped his cigar against a fragile *demi-tasse*. "There's something I guess I've got to say to you, young man. It's my duty."

Andy just managed to suppress a smile. "Shoot," he however said.

McGregor turned his cigar in his mouth. "I couldn't ever see why two people couldn't be friends outside of business hours, no matter what they had to be *inside*."

Andy twinklingly supposed he couldn't.

"Of course," McGregor pursued, "there was once or twice when I had to sprinkle a little glass in front of your auto, but that was during business hours. Right down at bottom, young fellow, I always liked you. I liked your grit; I liked your fight—and I found out I even liked your damn-fool stand of No-Compromise."

"Thanks," Andy said into his blouse collar.

"I'm old enough to be your dad," continued McGregor. "Fact is, I had a kid once, and he died. If he'd lived, he'd be just your age. And he had red hair."

There was a gap of silence. The young soldier studied his coffee-cup and discovered that something was stinging his eyes which he had to blink to keep there. The contractor looked at the ceiling and smoked violently. Presently McGregor resumed:

"Anyhow, I liked you. I like you now, and I don't want to see you get in wrong with life. Being an older man, it's my duty to give you a pointer."

Andy looked up quickly. "I think I've been in right ever since I came to France. *Ever since*," he added. "Oh, I know some of the censors are decent chaps. Most of them. I had a long talk with one about Alan Seegar and Rupert Brooke and—and such things. It isn't the individuals, but they've got a sort of fog-gas that they use against the people at home, the way the Germans use mustard-gas against the Allies."

"You're thinking of the censorship?"

"Yes."

"I'm not."

"And I was right when I enlisted. I found that out"—Andy nodded northward—"up there."

"You know you could have had a commission."

"Somewhere behind the lines; we needed fighting men."

"A lot of 'em, my son, a lot of 'em. You were just one."

"Then I was one more," said Andy.

"Oh, all right," McGregor soothed him. "Anyhow, you're in for it now. I'll do what I can for you—"

"I want to earn what I get."

"Sure you do. I know now. All I say is, I'll try to see you get what you earn. But that's not what I wanted to talk to you about."

Again Andy said: "Shoot."

McGregor was a long time beginning.

"Fellows like you are," he finally said, "get the idea that the Lord made women according to the rule of 'the best comes last.' He didn't. It's the way the man said: 'The Lord waited till everything else in creation was ready, because He didn't want the job he was at all talked over and pulled to pieces and made over again.' Now, we both of us know an actress—"

Andy moved uneasily.

"Don't get excited. Remember how it was I came to talk to you. This time I want a chance to say something that won't hurt anybody.—Well, then, this young lady's a nice girl—as nice as any stage-people and nicer'n most—but actresses aren't the sort a young fellow wants to think too much about if he's going to get on in the world."

Andy sat silent a while, twisting an empty wine-glass.

"I'm not in any danger of thinking too much about this particular actress," he finally said.

"You waited too long to make up that speech," said McGregor.

"It's true, anyhow," asserted Andy, "and besides, there's no reason why an actress can't be"—he had forgotten nothing, but he went on—"a good woman."



"Oh—*reason!*" McGregor pulled at his mustache. "What's reason got to do with it? Reason don't count with women. If you find you're beginning to like a woman, first thing for you to find out is if she's got a husband."

There was an inexplicable catch in Andy's throat. "A—a husband?"

"In the background," nodded McGregor. "Most of 'em have, you know—actresses."

"I'm afraid I don't understand."

In the fewest possible words—and the kindest—McGregor told, before interruption was possible, the story of the money sent to New Orleans. "Who is Ainslee Rayburn?" he concluded: "and why does she send money to him?"

"It's none of our business," said Andy; but he added: "It might be her brother."

"It might be," said McGregor, disregarding the first statement, "but it isn't. It never is."

Andy got up. "We mustn't talk any more about it," said he. "I tell you, there isn't any danger for me—in the way you think."

McGregor meant every word he said. Now something in Andy's voice touched him even more deeply, and something in Andy's face made him sure that there was indeed no danger. He got up, too. He came around the table and put his arm about the boy's sturdy shoulders.

"I see," he said: "there was something else—something I didn't know about."

"Yes," said Andy. "Let's go round to the casino. Let's see the show there. I've only seen it three times."

"I can't," McGregor answered. "I've got a man coming here at nine."

"Then, if you don't mind, I think *I'll* go."

"But"—McGregor's face bespoke his anxiety—"I'll see you before you start back?"

"Of course you will. I don't leave till eight to-morrow night."

## III

Contrary to his expectations, it was a new performance that Andy saw at the casino. Illness had invaded the company that was concluding an engagement there; the company booked for the next week could not be hurried away from Paris, but a third company had been brought from the remnants of the American camp. Andy was late; when he arrived at the theater, Sylvia was on the stage.

She was speaking in the low voice the thrill of which he knew so well. The footlights showed her massed hair, her level brows, the childlike mouth, the perfect contour of cheek and neck. She raised, in a bit of stage-business, a hand as white as cherry-blossoms. . . .

## IV

She started at sight of Andy when, with an instantly recognizing Tac leading her, she found the straight young soldier waiting at the stage-door.

"Andy!" she cried.

She ran a few steps toward him; then stopped uncertainly. In two great strides he came forward.

They had a thousand things to say to each other, for both forgot, in the surprise of meeting, the restraint that each had felt when last they parted; but Sylvia, it appeared, might only make the rounds of the Grand Cercle's gardens: she must return for a rehearsal. The next day was a Sunday, and there was no Sunday rehearsing permitted under Y. M. C. A. auspices.

"So I have to go now," she said.

"But I want to hear more about you!"

"I want to hear *all* about you."

"I haven't half begun to tell you yet."

"There'll be other days. We're to take the other company's place and play here all next week."

"I'm going to-morrow," said Andy: "in the evening."

The casino's windows flooded their path with light. He could see her draw away from his announcement.

"Back—there?" she asked.

He nodded.

"Oh," she said, "and I *have* to go now!"

He could not have told what his feelings were. "Don't go."

"I must."

He thought of taking her white hand and keeping her by force. He thought of nothing else.

"Don't go. I've half a mind not to let you."

It was as if he indeed held her. "Please," she pleaded.

"Do you want to go?" he demanded.

"I must." Her voice faltered.

He bent to her. "But do you *want* to?"

She shook her golden head.

"Say it," said Andy.

She shook her head again.

"Say it," he commanded.

He could scarcely catch her whispered: "I don't want to go."

The roll of a drum came from the *grande salle* of the casino. It was the prelude of one of the band's fox-trots, but the band was a military-band, and the sound passed like marching men between them. It broke a spell.

"But you'll have to-morrow free," said Andy.

"Oh, yes—to-morrow."

Their tones had become conventional.

"And you still like to walk?"

"Of course."

"Then we'll drive through the mountains to a place I know and walk back by the lake."

"I'd love it."

"Is nine o'clock too early—for an actress?"

"Not for a 'Y' actress in France."

He went back with her to the stage-door and there bade her good night quite as he might have said it to any other girl.

## V

All he would do, he promised himself, would be to be her friend. In that there was no harm; he owed it to her. As for going with her unchaperoned into the hills—well, people did that sort of thing, especially American people, in war-time France. She could, she said, arrange “leave” and thereby have permission to wear mufti instead of uniform. He would consider nothing concerning her save her friendship. But, when he went next morning to see McGregor, he did not think it necessary to mention to the contractor her presence in Aix. That would be soon enough known; to speak of it would be to invite the renewal of a discussion doubtless well intended, yet scarcely delicate.

McGregor, finishing a thoroughly American breakfast, was propped against many pillows in a very French bed. Sunshine poured in through the windows, enhancing the pink rosebuds of the Chicagoan’s nightgown.

“You’re early, young man,” said McGregor.

“Army habits,” Andy explained.

“Have a cigar. They’re over there on the bureau. I smoked the last of the lot I put on the bed-table, last night.”

“No, thanks,” said Andy. “I just came in to say good-by.”

“Good-by?” McGregor’s pudgy face grew grave. “Why, you don’t go till to-night, do you?”

“Something’s turned up. I’m going to be away all day.”—Youth is involuntarily a little careless of maturity.—“So I’ve checked my kit at the *gare*, and I’ll go right there when I get back to town.” Then Andy saw how McGregor was taking it, and his heart smote him. “I’m sorry.”

The elder man asked no awkward questions. He held out his right hand, and Andy took it, and then McGregor put his free arm about the young fellow’s shoulder.

“You didn’t mind me saying that to you last night?”

Andy shook his head. It was the time for a generous lie.

“And you’re sure you wouldn’t like that—well, that commission?”

"Not that one," said Andy, smiling his thanks. "Quite sure."

Neither spoke for a second. Then McGregor said:

"Take care of yourself."

"I will," said Andy.

"There's no sense," said McGregor, "in running unnecessary risks. So don't be a damn' fool."

That was his farewell.

## VI

And Andy and Sylvia drove up through the hills that rose into mountains—drove in a low open carriage that gave them the freedom of the queer villages and the wide woodlands and the roadside sanctuaries—drove behind a horse that did not tire and a driver that could crack his whip in the romantic style. Tac sat, like a statue of Watchfulness, on the front seat, and they talked as a man and a woman do when they are real friends—which is to say merrily and about everything save the thing that happens to be nearest to their hearts.

They dismissed the carriage on the summit of the last hill and prevailed on an ancient inn-keeper to make them a wonderful omelette, which they ate, to the accompaniment of a no less wonderful white wine of the country, in a little room of their own, although there was not another visitor about the place. They laughed a good deal—Andy could still forget horrors when he felt that horrors should be forgotten. Sylvia recounted, at his urging, incidents of her tours among the soldiers, and made Andy tell her, with many blushing hesitations, a little about his trench-experiences and, unhesitatingly, a great deal about his regiment and his company and about Johnson, Levy and Flynn, about Chrissy, wounded Davies and Campbell and poor Winters, and what fine fellows they were, and how—for so Andy's memory saw it—they had always been kind to him and treated him well.

The late luncheon over and the slow coffee consumed—who would want liqueurs on such a day?—they went to the porch that overhung the mountainside and looked down at Le Bourget. Enfolded in perfumes wafted upward by the invigorating

firs, the picture was a study in green and blue. The sloping acres of vineyards immediately beneath them were from here invisible; the sky was a sheer cloudless azure, the great steep opposite embowered heights of verdure; the long lake, with now and then a tiny boat upon it, mirrored at once the tints of wood and sky.

Sylvia looked with the wind in her hair and wonder in her eyes. Andy, beside her, dreamed that the war was at a triumphant end: it was the happiest afternoon of his life.

Clambering downward, there were times when he had to take her hand and help her over this or that rock, around the sides of this or that abrupt declivity. Not till then did something of his old feelings reassert itself frankly in the old guise, and only then bring with it the puzzle and pain in which he had thought they ended.

The excursionists were silent, but forest-birds broke their silence with silver song; golden shafts of sunlight fell straight from heaven through the primeval trees; their feet sank softly into mossy beds, and there came to them the shy scurrying of startled animals moving too quickly to be seen. The heart of the springtime beat audibly, the rising of its new blood was all but heard, and when they reached the long empty road that ran beside the water, when the descending sun cast shadows far ahead of them, both, though neither at once guessed it, were drawing near a forgetful surrender to those cosmic forces that use a superhuman tolerance to bend all things to their will.

The sun, as they walked, sank lower. The first pale star of early evening hung above the lake; there was a hush solemn, religious, over hillside and water; tempting the soul out of the body, the air was sweet with wild flowers. Andy found himself saying to her:

"McGregor's in Aix. He had a talk with me last night—a long talk."

The familiar wing of perplexity ruffled her level brows.

"You wrote me, before you—went away," she said, "that you couldn't see me. I didn't try to see you, after that, until I heard that you were going."

"And then," said Andy, "you didn't tell me why you hadn't tried to see me."

"Wasn't your note," she asked, "reason enough?"

There came that instant when the day and night are one; the world stood still; the air was an air of revelation.

"Reason enough," Andy ruefully admitted, "and I'm ashamed of it."

She was looking straight ahead of her, up the white ribbon of the road between the indigo waters and the purple hills. "I—I thought it might be wise, if we—if we didn't meet again."

They went on walking. There was a poignant ache in Andy's heart: he did not attempt the difficult task of discovering the reason for what he said:

"But you did come to see me at the station."

Her voice fell. "To tell you good-by," said Sylvia.

"McGregor's in Aix," the boy repeated. "Last night he had a long talk with me."

Her eyes remained fixed on the white-and-purple distance, but he saw that they were swimming. Her face was nobly beautiful, and yet pathetically girlish.

"Mr. McGregor," she said, "has been kind to me. He helped me to send some money to my mother, Ainslee Rayburn, in New Orleans. Oh, he thought the 'y' was queer, I know, but Raeburn looks so much better on a program!—My mother," she added, "has not had a happy life. She has to have an attendant. I have never—never been able to get used to the idea of sending her to an—an institution."

As Sylvia spoke, the sun dropped behind the western hills, and, with that suddenness with which such changes take place along Le Bourget, the insect chorus rose from the woods, and all the lanterns of the night were lighted in the sky.

"Sylvia!"

As one born to the Church, but turned to doubt, unknowingly might wander by dark into a vast cathedral and there, without forewarning, see some miracle of modern mechanics flash into light every candle on the high altar, revealing the crucifix above, the veiled host below, and as he, so

seeing, must feel his knees bend under him and his head bow while, though reason remains, faith returns and rises above all reason, so, at this moment, Andy Brown. Only error can breed error; where there was the child, there must the dam be:

"Garcia—that night—one night—I'd started to his rooms—about those letters—I saw you come out—"

"I went there to get them. I got them. I sent them to you—afterward."

Close by, in a green thicket, a nightingale burst into song.

Under the light of the stars, she stood before him, pale, resolute and pure. Under the music of the bird, the echo of her voice surrounded her—the meaning of her words smote him at once with shame and exaltation. He saw her as enraptured peasants at the roadside-shrines along this lake had seen, rising from the passion of their prayers, the likenesses of those whom they besought; the dew sparkled in her lashes and her hair: hers were the eyes of high adventure, her gaze the gaze of excellent duty; it needed only the poetry that he could never write, but must always live, to see the gleam of the casque and the corselet of the Maid. . . .

"Sylvia!"

"He wanted me to watch you, and I thought, if I pretended to, I could help save you from him."

Her voice caught. She turned her head quickly from him. She clenched her slender hands at her sides.

He had wronged her horribly, and now, when he was going away, he knew the truth. . . .

More truths than one, for he knew also—

But it was too late now. It was too late.

In the starlight, the scent of the wild flowers grew sweeter. The song of the nightingale ravished his ears and maddened his heart.

His slim young figure quivered. He drew very close. He put out his appealing hands. "Can you ever forgive me?"

The bird was calling—calling.

"There's nothing to forgive, Andy."

He forgot all his awkwardness; he forgot one-half of his



awe. He told her everything. He laid bare his earliest dreams. He gave no ear to her protestations. With the eloquence of utter self-disregard, he painted her as she had been to him before ever he saw her—when first he saw her—through the days of his bitter fight against governmental procrastination and heartbreaking mismanagement—through the no more bitter nights in the trenches.

"Please," she pleaded—"please. I'm just a woman, Andy."

But he would not hear.

"I want you to know it; I just want you to know it, that's all. It was you made me everything I am—everything that's any good at all."

"You mustn't."

"It was you."

"I can't stand it!"

"I tell you, it was you. You gave me the strength to go up against that gang; it was you gave me at last the faith to enlist. First you made me so I could risk disgrace from the press-division, and I risked it; then, when the need came, you said the Cause was bigger than its mistakes, and I knew that was true—"

"Andy! Don't, Andy!"

"I will. I must. This once I've got to. You've been everything—everything—*everything* for me and to me. You're a million miles above me, but I have to let you know—let you know and then leave you: I—I worship you, and I—I love you, Sylvia!"

With the sound of that last phrase, he came to abrupt pause. A silence descended. She had drawn from him—put up a white hand before her lowered eyes. Even the song of the bird ceased; lake, hills and sky seemed to be holding their breath.

Ever so slightly she swayed. He thought she would fall; he caught her waist.

"Don't—don't love me," she whispered; but as she let fall her hand, he felt her velvet fingers chance to touch his hair, and that light touch shattered the last armor of his restraint.

He seized the hand. He dragged her to him; he bent back

her golden head; he forced her wistful face toward his. With a glad cry, he bent to her, and she, crying out with him, flung her arms around his neck, and their lips were joined.

Sylvia wrenched herself free.

"No, no, *no!*" she said. And the iron doors of the impossible seemed to clang between them as she said it.

He was plunged from staggering delight against staggering dismay. "You don't mean—"

"I shouldn't have let you. I mean"—again her white hands hid her face—"I mean I'm ashamed."

He tried to pull her hands away. "But Sylvia—"

"Oh, I can never forgive myself!" she moaned.

"For making me happy? Sylvia!" He thought he understood. "There's somebody else?"

But she shook her head.

"Then why—" He felt as if a chill wind had blown down the valley. "I see: I know: of course, you can't love me. How could *you* love *me*?"

There came, under the stars, a great light upon her face.

"Andy," she said, "you're worthy of the best woman's love; but you told me a little while ago you thought, once, I was a kind of Joan of Arc—"

"I always thought so;" and he vowed, "I always will."

"I'm not that. I'm only a very ordinary sort of woman—just like most, Andy—nothing great, or fine, or wonderful—"

"I know better."

"—but I'm your friend, Andy. Can't we let it go at that? Can't you? Can't you let me be just your friend?"

She put out both her hands to him.

"If that's the most—" he said.

"It must be, Andy—so long, so long as we're in France."

"Sylvia!"

A raucous whistle tore the air.

"Your train!" she cried.

"Not yet," he said, straining his eyes to search hers and pledge his love to them. "There's time. It's miles away. The sound carries far; I've often heard it. And the train waits fifteen minutes at Aix. And Sylvia—"

He drew her toward him, a little apart from the roadway. He would not be resisted. "You mean," he demanded, "that afterward you'll—"

"Oh, Andy, don't you see? I mustn't love you now. I came to France to work; it was a sort of vow to myself—"

"Is *that* all?" His voice was loud with relief. "But you love me? You do? You do?"

He had her face close to his, her eyes upturned to his again.

"It's forever and ever," he whispered.

"Forever and ever—after the war!"

## VII

In the shadows outside the station-yard, she stopped.

"I'll not go in," she said.

"No," said Andy.

People were hurrying to and fro. There were shouts and laughter.

"It's better to say it out here."

"To say it out here, yes."

"Oh, Andy, I'm afraid," she said. A blue electric lamp sputtered into life and shone on her face. A little, crooked smile twisted her lips.

He had to hold back his tears. Somehow a new responsibility had come to him. He ought to stay and look after her. She was very fragile in the lamplight, and he so strong in his khaki.

"God bless you," said Sylvia, with something like a sob.

He wanted to kneel on the pavement. He had her blessing; he had her love. He held her close for a long moment. He wanted to protect her.

Then it was as if, by a miracle, she again protected him. It was as if, again, there was little of her that was woman, and what was not woman was indeed the Cause. For the sure triumph of that cause he was going back to fight—she wanted him to feel that way. Love he would forever give her, but a worship also, which was more than even love. Afterward—.

"Good-by," she said.

Reverently, he kissed her hand.

"You'll always be Joan of Arc to *me*," said Andy.

### VIII

Carriage-doors were banging. The guards called shrilly. He dashed from her. An excited railway-servant flung him his kit. He ran through the gate and stormed a car.

The train pulled out of the shed. Andy put his face against the cold window-pane.

He saw her standing where he had left her, under the light of the sputtering lamp.

Never once looking up, never once guessing that she was visible to him, Sylvia was pressing to her lips the hand that his lips had touched. Her bosom tossed, the tears rained down her cheeks; she kissed her fingers where his kiss had been.

Andy wrenched the window. It would not open, and she did not look up.

### IX

Two weeks later, when his regiment was again in billets, Andy received a hurried note from Sylvia. It was addressed to her "Dear-Friend-until-after-the-war" and signed "Yours affectionately." It said that her work in France was drawing to a close, that she was soon to sail for home, but that she would like to see Andy before leaving and would, indeed, be playing on the next evening after he received the missive, at a town only twenty miles behind that in which he then happened to be.

Andy asked permission to go. He would be away but twenty-four hours, and Captain Bates seemed to think the request reasonable. It was Garcia who, hearing of it, interfered. He said that Private Brown had, one night, been negligent in his guard-duty, and so Andy remained with his regiment.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### HOW CHRISSLY CAME TO MIRANDE-LA-FALOISE, AND HOW ANDY STAYED THERE

ONE balmy night of stars, cross-eyed Corporal Johnson came running back to the ruined cottage in which his squad was quartered.

"Full kits!" he cried. "We're goin' to move."

Campbell and Davies, both of whom had recovered from the effects of their wounds, set up, as scarred men have the right to do, an echo of complaint.

"Move again? Where the hell are they goin' to send us now?"

"I never seen such a bunch. They don't know their own minds. They don't know *what* they want."

Nobody knew anything certainly, but every sort of rumor spread through the village: they were going into new trenches, the American Army was about to take over Verdun, the British front was broken, and this Yankee division was to be hurried to the rescue. A hundred reports came from nowhere and went everywhere.

Within half an hour the roads leading to the nearest railway-station were choked by marching men. Staff-cars tore down the center of the way, the captains giving quick commands that the lieutenants and non-commissioned officers repeated just in time to prevent their cursing men from courting disaster. A sluggish flood of trucks lumbered by. Andy's regiment joined the march and melted into it.

They came to the railway-town, but the big square in front of the station overflowed soldiers, and late comers could not get near it. Hoarse voices shouted. Men flung down their arms and accouterments and went to sleep upon them, only

to be roused at once and moved, protesting loudly, a few yards to left or right. Whistles blew and bells rang.

"If the Heinies don't know what we're doin' it's no fault of ours," grumbled Chrissly.

"And if our brass-hats does know," said Campbell, "I'm a liar."

Slowly it developed that most of the soldiers were to be loaded into motor-trucks, and the turmoil of that loading, the loss of platoons and companies, the piling into one conveyance in obedience to one order only to be tumbled out again in obedience to another—these things gave to the helpless participants a sense of nightmare. Hours were lost in confusion, energy passed into hysteria. It was with loyal satisfaction that Andy observed how his leathern Captain Bates retained soldierly calm.

Finally, some of the trucks were loaded and started away. That bearing Andy and his immediate companions forced a slow passage among threatening men still unplaced. It stopped, went on again, stopped. It got clear of the square and had to wait for other trucks. The other trucks came, and the caravan left the town and received orders to wait upon another caravan. Morning was on the fields when the journey really began. So many of the men as could, filled the open end of the truck, those behind making those in front sit down and kneel down, in order to provide some glimpses of the countryside and to wave to the men in the truck that followed; thus they saw fields and villages bounce by them.

Andy was uncomfortable, and so were his companions. At the last moment, kits had been reduced to the fighters' barest necessities. The lice and fleas were active; the trucks jolted; Ryan said that the supply trains had been cut, and that there would be little rations, if any. There was no tobacco.

"Know where we're headed for?" Johnson asked of the first sergeant.

Ryan didn't know. "I heard one colonel say it was somewhere between thirty and forty miles."

Even above the roar of the camions, there rose persistent from the distance the low rumble of guns.

## II

At a hilltop they were told to get out and march. All the roads below them, converging behind a high hill, were full of soldiers, cars and wagons, some moving slowly forward, others mixing in whirlpools, the men swearing, the wheels locked, officers gesticulating wildly. The ways were full of ruts; dust rose in choking clouds; everybody coughed. Now and then an infantryman would twist his ankle and fall out of line. Some ran about like juvenile picnickers that have lost their parents. Broken sentences, accepted as inspired truths, passed along:

"'Tain't trenches. We're goin' to have the real thing at last."

"The Boche've broke through up that way near a lot of villages where the people've went back. We're goin' in to stop the advance."

"They say we're goin' to have a hell of a time: ten divisions against us."

"They say our artillery ain't got enough shells to support us."

"They say we don't know nothin' about the Heinies because we ain't got a single scoutin' plane with us."

The enemy was none too far away; his guns grew momentarily more clearly audible; but nobody seemed really to care about the inequalities of the possible conflict. They could win against any numbers and under any disadvantages. The great joyous fact was that there was to be a "real scrap," by which was meant an open battle. Chrissly summarized the division's sentiments:

"It's our chance't, Andy! It's our big chance't!"

Dusk at length fell, and the officers' flash-lamps came out.

Andy's rifle bruised his shoulder, but he began to sing. In a high clear voice he sang *The Marseillaise*, and his tired comrades joined him, until Captain Bates sharply commanded silence.

## III

They swung into a village street, about which there was something familiar to Andy. He had missed the name on the *plaque*; so had every one near him. Twin rows of cottages, clean and thrifty, rose on either hand; fertile fields fell away behind these, and what must generally have been a little creek, but what far-away rains had now swollen to the size of a small river, ran through the meadows. Save that shops were closed and that the men were marching, there was nothing of war about the place. A few cottagers stood along the curb, and, at sight of them, the soldiers became more erect, their steps more swinging. In spite of the enjoined silence, Flynn, who had a sprig of green thrust into his rifle-barrel, began to chant the old song:

“For we won’t be home until mor-ning. . . .”

Some staff-officers were grouped in a doorway: the men’s heads went up; they should have been physically worn out by their journey; they were sleepless, stiff, footsore; their uniforms were white with dust, their hands and faces blackened; yet they were happy.

Andy saw before him at the end of the street a quite formidable house, an old inn that, in this village where, it was evident, remained even traces of Roman days, dated from medieval times and that displayed for sign the lilies of French royalty. Then he remembered: this was Mirande-la-Faloise, at which, so long ago, he had waited for the train. He had no sooner realized it than a woman—a splendid, dusky, pantherine woman—ran out of the inn and into the ranks: Léonie flung her arms about Chrissy amid the good-natured laughter of his fellows. . . .

Andy heard the passing colonel complain to Captain Bates:

“Why in thunder haven’t they sent these civilians out of here?”

“God knows,” said the captain.



"Well," muttered the colonel, "it's too late now."

His regiment rested in the village, and Andy noticed that the colonel and some of his officers were being conducted by cottagers around the place and across the fields toward the woods that lay a half-mile beyond the inn. They seemed to be observing the ground and judging its martial possibilities, as well as the scanty light permitted.

Chrissy secured a stolen quarter of an hour with Léonie. Andy got some bread and wine from her and dozed against a house-wall. Past the outskirts of Mirande-la-Faloise, myriads of marching men and army-trains pressed inexorably northward. There was an air-alarm and some activity on the part of rapidly mounted anti-aircraft guns. The sounds of heavy cannonading seemed to draw nearer.

That night the regiment deployed from the line of march. It crossed the fields, went through the woods and took a road that ran around other fields and into hills; but then it came hurriedly back to the village. Riders had met its advance-guard and delivered messages. All the succeeding night was passed in Mirande-la-Faloise.

Andy slept on the floor in a cottage, with the other members of his platoon. He slept badly, because the cannonading increased in violence. He was awakened at dawn by an uproar of distraught men hastening pellmell through the street and away from the direction in which he knew the front to be—strange men in blue-gray with sweat and blood upon them.

Somewhere a part of the retiring first line had crumbled. The Germans were tearing through. They were upon the hills. They were coming toward this village.

#### IV

Andy was one of a scurrying crowd, of which each member was seeking his own company, his own squad, and all were being sworn at by excited officers. Men were buckling their stiff belts as they ran. Sergeants shouted. Captains yelled commands.

"Where the hell's our artillery?" somebody asked.

And somebody answered: "They're in the right place, but they haven't got the shells."

More commands were given, and the non-commissioned officers seemed to divine their meaning. A column that included Andy tramped into the fields behind the inn, resolved itself into a line spread wide in extended order. It passed through the woods to the other fields and came in sight of the hills beyond.

Out of the sides of those hills burst a biting rattle.

Arrived in the open, the regiment, dripping from its recent immersion, stopped uncertainly. Andy saw a man drop his rifle, throw his hands up, pitch headlong. Another's legs bent under him, and he gently collapsed. A shouted word came from up the line. Captain Bates gave the signal:

"Charge!"

At what? At nothing but some hills out of which came bullets, a crisscross rain of bullets, which swept the wide unprotected fields of approach.

They ran. They fell. They got up again—some of them—and ran on. Twice, while lying down, they fired. The machine-guns' bullets whizzed overhead like angry bees. Lieutenant Graaberg received a scalp-wound and swore cheerfully at the blood that drenched his face, but could be observed shaking his blond head when Captain Bates told him to go back. You could now see the flash that preceded the explosions. The hills were a little nearer, but very little.

Bleeding men, mostly silent, but some howling, began to turn back and reel toward the rear, their faces grotesquely contorted by pain. Others fell, too badly wounded to move. Some were killed outright. The extended line ran on.

Andy's breath came in short gasps that cut his throat. He no longer tried to avoid the fallen. At first he had recognized this one or that, but now he recognized none. There was no time to care for any; all that could must continue to go forward. Anybody might be the next to be hit.

There came an increased rain from the machine-guns. It seemed a solid mass of lead. The long line wavered.

"Go on! Go on!" yelled Captain Bates. His wiry figure bounced up and down. What else he said could not be heard. He caught a turning soldier by the collar and shook him as a pedagogue shakes a recalcitrant pupil.

Chrissly was beside Andy.

"We've got to go on," said Chrissly. "There's Léonie back there. They mustn't git to Léonie."

Graaberg, wiping the blood from his blue eyes, ran up and down among the bullets, persuading the men. Something struck Andy's rifle and shattered its stock; at once Chrissly darted to a dead man, secured that one's fallen rifle and thrust it into Andy's eager hands.

"God damn it!" bawled Captain Bates, "come on!"

He leaped out in front of the line, and the line stiffened.

Then three runners were seen approaching. First one and then another fell, but the third reached the captain. They bore orders to retire.

## V

Somehow, in the hailstorm of pelting bullets, the withdrawal was made, and made without disorder. They reached the woods. Complaining now that they had not been permitted to proceed, that they had been risked to no purpose, that they had not so much as seen one of the enemy, they passed on to the village.

Here they were to make a stand.

Andy's company was assigned to the Inn of the Lilies. The old house was strong. It rose above the swollen stream and looked out over the fields, directly upon the woods. Captain Bates stationed some men outside, behind a low wall, close beside the stream. The others went through the house and brought mattresses to the windows of the dining-room that commanded the space across which the enemy must pass. An old peasant—Andy wondered if this could be Léonie's father—directed the search.

Chrissly hurried through the house. In one room, a white-haired woman was quietly knitting; she looked at him with

dumb reproachful eyes, but said nothing. In the tap-room he found Léonie.

"Go!" he said. "They are coming, the Boche. You must go."

She raised to him the damp gaze of those born near the soil.

"When you go," she answered.

"But, Léonie—"

Garcia entered and ordered him back to the dining-room.

## VI

There were four windows here. From one of them Andy and Chrissy watched the now empty fields and the silent woods. Lieutenant Graaberg, his head bandaged and his blond hair caked with blood, stood in the center, a pistol in his hand. Down the stream, now whirled this way and now that, floated the dead body of a grinning doughboy.

"Hold your ammunition," the lieutenant commanded. "Don't fire till I tell you."

For a long time the men crouching behind the mattressed windows saw nothing. Then the tree-trunks of the woods seemed to move.

One of the men at the river-wall put up his head. Immediately there was a shot. He fell outspread; his legs twitched like a frog's; he lay still. A comrade jumped up and fired blindly.

"Stop that!" cried Graaberg. "Lie down, or—"

A gust of bullets swept from the woods and spattered on the walls of the inn. One or two tiles were dislodged and crashed to earth.

"They're comin'!" cried the man that had fired.

A long line of gray came out of the woods.

"Hold your fire," cautioned Graaberg. He was smiling serenely. "Wait for my order."

He came behind the kneeling Andy, who bent above with rifle ready, every nerve aquiver. The lieutenant peered at the advancing line.

A second followed it, and a third. A fourth appeared.

Campbell, at the next window, said: "There's a whole army of 'em."

"We should worry!" laughed Flynn.

It was more, however, than the lonely American regiment had counted upon. Graaberg ran out of the room and returned with Captain Bates. The captain gave one glance from the window.

"Fire at will!" he commanded.

All the rifles rang out. Men were seen to fall from the advancing lines, but the lines came on as if at parade. Nobody could kill enough of them: so much was at once clear. Here was a fight of ten to one. Captain Bates sent Garcia on an errand for the colonel.

Andy and his companions kept on firing. The room filled with stifling smoke. The advancing lines would pause to reply, and bullets clattered again upon the walls. Ibráhím Reshid, the Turk, was shot in the face; he tottered to the center of the room and fell there; Graaberg dragged the body out of the way.

There was an explosion overhead.

"Shrapnel," said Bates to Graaberg. "They're getting the range. They've got their big guns back of the hills. *They'll* open soon—and we can't reply."

The body of a man fell from an upper window.

Stripped to their waists, the soldiers in the dining-room were firing with all the rapidity at their command. Dust and smoke made a darkness cut only by flashes of flame. Sweat poured from faces and added to the pungent odor of the powder. The enemy paused and replied with systematic regularity; they shot well: Campbell lay in a pool of blood, killed instantly; near him a comrade was struck in the head and his brain spattered over his neighbor; many were wounded, and of these some lay moaning horribly. Stray bullets had broken mirrors and shattered the walls; the floor was an ensanguined clutter of broken glass and plaster.

Suddenly, with a roar to which the explosion of the shrap-

nel was as the sound of a mere popgun, a great shell fell on the river-bank and sent high in air earth, mud, water and the stones of the wall.

Garcia dived into the room from the street.

"We're to go!" he yelled to Captain Bates. "The colonel says nobody could hold this place. The whole division's falling back!"

Three more explosions shook the village.

"Come on!" cried Bates. "In order, now. There's no hurry."

But there was hurry. As he spoke, one whole side of the inn collapsed in a brain-splitting roar.

Chrissy darted for the tap-room. Andy resolved on one more shot; he looked, through a heavy cloud, at the fields outside. Across them the calm lines were still advancing. Behind one group, he saw a man that seemed to be an officer running up and down. Andy fired, and the officer spun around and toppled over.

Then all the regiment was in the street.

## VII

All the regiment, and, it at first seemed, much of the division. The bitterness of defeat, the scourge of panic, whipped them. Those who had accouterments were flinging them away. The little thoroughfare was a ruck of swirling men, plunging animals, snorting motors. The rage of hundreds rose in a chorus of cries and was swept away upon a blast of disorder. The shells roared, houses were smashed to splinters. A mounted officer, whether in an endeavor to rally his men or to escape, rode into the mob, trampling the fugitives, and was unhorsed. Andy had a glimpse of Garcia running with his head down and his hands to his ears, of the colonel swearing and cajoling. Graaberg seized Garcia's arm.

"Take your hands off o' me!" shrieked Garcia. He raised his fist and beat his fellow lieutenant on the latter's wounded head.

The vast torrent swirled Andy out of the village.

"But it's not the end," he kept saying over and over. "It's not the end! Something's slipped, that's all. We're going to win."

Then the Germans reached the village, and, from its point of vantage, began to pour a steady rifle-fire into the retreating Americans. Captain Bates, rallying such of his men as he could find, fell beside the road; under a spatter of bullets, Andy darted back, picked the officer up and, with the dead weight across his shoulders, resumed his retreat.

As he did so, he saw the glad signs of order's restoration. The panic had been short-lived, and the colonel of Andy's regiment had checked it. He quieted the men, he reawakened the pride that only inexperience had made vulnerable. Andy's last glance backward showed an organized rear-guard protecting the retirement. The Germans held *Mirande-la-Falloise*, but they would come no farther.

## VIII

There were strong positions behind the village, and to these the Americans were going. Shells shrieked overhead. Some exploded among the fields and some, scattering men and motors, in the road.

Andy, by dint of many questions, obtained news of a field-hospital. He was soon part of a separate procession, bound thither. Some of the wounded hobbled alone, using their rifles as crutches; others walked with their arms about companions' necks, or were carried in the arms of less injured men; most were on improvised litters or regimental stretchers.

The exterior of the white farmhouse toward which this march directed itself was like the outside of a slaughter-house. Men lay on the reddened grass, some dying, some that had fainted, others in every variety of suffering. Buckets of bloody water stood about, and even amputated arms and legs had been flung among the maimed. Fat flies buzzed busily; a low murmur of suffering quivered on the heavy air, and out of the open door came a breath in which the scent of an-

esthetics mixed with the reek of riven flesh. Among those who could speak there was an outcry against the paucity of American shells that had made this slaughter possible, but more expressed only chagrin at the defeat and most predicted speedy retaliation.

"It's lucky my trade's a bench-job," said a man whose legs were destined to go.

"I'll hate to draw a pension," said a wan boy, shot through the middle: "It's taken such a little while to earn it."

Andy staggered up to a hurrying surgeon whose arms dripped from a score of operations.

"What you got there?" asked the surgeon. He was a thin overworked fellow, wearing tortoise-shell goggles. "Put it down—put it down!"

"Here?" asked Andy. "On the ground?"

"There's no room inside."

Very gently Andy laid his burden on the grass.

The goggled surgeon gave one look. "You've had your work for nothing," he declared: "the man's dead"—and he hurried on to another case.

## IX

In a cottage under a hill Andy found the remnants of his own command, and found it busy with explanations and excuses. Everybody was sure that reinforcements would come up during the night and that Mirande-la-Faloise would be retaken next morning; Levy was especially convincing. In Andy's squad only Campbell had been killed, and though Johnson and Flynn were hit, their wounds were superficial: they would fight on the morrow: in order to be certain of it, they refused to go to report to the medical-officers. But Chrissly was missing.

"Sure, I seen him go down with a bullet in his head just before we cleared out of the *hotel*," said Flynn.

"No you didn't," said big Davies. "He was standin' right alongside that stable before the shell struck it."

Andy remembered Léonie's presence at the inn and said



nothing. He thought: "Chrissly remained to protect her, and has paid the price."

Overcome with fatigue, he sat down in the cottage doorway. The sun sank, the firing lessened. In a farmhouse a candle twinkled through a crack in the shutters. It was there that the divisional staff received its reports, pored over maps, sent forth telegrams and made desperate plans for vengeance. They would have it—this, Andy repeated, was not the end. He was so sure of the coming triumph that he could dismiss the day's defeat.

He counted Chrissly dead and sorrowed for him. He pictured that peaceful Amish farm—its two old people—the scene when the telegram from the War Department should come. . . .

He thought of his mother and of Blunston. He thought what a quiet night this must be in Americus—the boys would be going swimming soon—and he thought of Sylvia.

A figure crept out of the darkness.

"Andy!"

The whisper reached him as he was about to doze. It was as if the dead spoke. He was sure it was the dead.

"Is that you, Chrissly?"

Chrissly Shuman clapped his hands on Andy's shoulders:

"Did you sink I'd runned away, Andy? I hung back fer Léonie. I got her just to the inn-door, an' then a shell come—a big one—an' I couldn't find her anywheres, Andy—not nowheres I couldn't find her at all. . . ."

## X

Reenforcements, in the shape of the rest of the division, were brought up during the night, and before morning preparations for the counter-attack began to take active form. Company after company was marched into the silent dark; everybody knew that there approached the opportunity of reparation.

Andy's regiment, it became evident, was to be sent directly against the village, traversing the road and fields along which

their retreat had lain. The way was almost level with their objective and was unprotected. Already the enemy's guns were bombarding their positions. The sunrise was shrouded in dense smoke; the air crackled; yet, tired as the men were, the realization of a new chance gave them fresh strength and buoyancy: they were like race-horses prancing at the line after a false start.

"Anyhow," said Levy, as the column halted at a crossroads and came to rest, "they won't use gas-shells. You see—"

"Who cares what the devils use?" demanded Flynn.

Whenever there was a parting of the red-streaked smoke-clouds, Mirande-la-Faloise was now in plain view, showing, at that distance, few signs of the wounds inflicted by yesterday's battle. Andy looked at it as the crusaders must have looked at Jerusalem; Chrissy looked at it out of haggard eyes. Behind them, the colonel was talking to a smiling Graaberg and a Garcia whose mouth worked with a nervous tick.

"But not without artillery—we *can't*," Garcia was complaining.

The colonel's answer was almost careless: "We've got to."

Andy caught the words; he caught the tone. We had to, therefore we would. Therein lay all of America in this whole conflict. For the time, the fate of Mirande-la-Faloise became the final fate of the war to Andy. Mirande-la-Faloise would be recaptured against the impossible, and its recapture would—yes, it would surely mean determining victory. . . .

## XI

Through waves of heat and billows of ripping bullets, the charge began. The men ran at dog-trot, their rifles grasped two-thirds of the way up the barrels. They ran with their bodies low, but with their souls high.

They were crossing the scene of their retreat. Helmets, mess-kits and blouses, water-bottles and entrenching tools were scattered broadcast, belts, boots, bayonets, torn leggings; they tripped over the discarded things. The wounded had

been gathered up, but the dead lay where they had fallen; corpses prone with fingers clawing at the ground, corpses supine with open mouths and staring eyes; one began to notice a certain repetition in their postures, as if a plethora of material had exhausted the possibilities of arrangement: too many had died of late for the living to be sorry for any one. And this was not the end; rather, it was the beginning.

The beginning of the triumph: that sense, once lodged in Andy's brain, remained there. He ran on, impelled by an inexhaustible energy; he laughed at every military caution. The bullets whined like hounds, men fell on his right hand and on his left; Andy was not afraid to fall, but fall he knew he could not until Mirande-la-Faloise had been won. Léonie waited there for Chrissy: he must help retake it for their sakes. The regiment's honor was pledged there: he must help redeem it. The new peril to the ancient cause was symbolized by this village: the symbol must be shattered and the reality crushed. A splendid rage bore him on its wings; democracy was at the door of victory; through the smoke, far ahead of him, he could see the golden hair and the gleaming sword of the Maid.

The intensity of the enemy's fire was withering; there was no pause, no respite; but the line of advance never faltered. This man was killed and that man wounded, but the men did not pause. Their shirts were stiff with filth, their trousers white with dust; through the caked dirt on their faces the sweat rolled in yellow runnels. Their eyes did not shift from their objective; they were crazed with an anger that kept them cold in the blistering heat. Thirst meant nothing to them, nor weariness. These soldiers who had been the puppets of panic scarcely thirteen hours ago now went forward against a fortified and unshelled enemy, went forward over unprotected fields, against a wind of death—as veterans march to a review.

## XII

Andy's battalion was to assault the southern extremity of the village, and his company was to strike in the center of

that part. Thus, at half a mile from the outlying houses, they debouched again into a piece of straight road, walled and lined with Lombardy poplars, which became farther up its length, the street of Mirande-la-Faloise. Arrived there, they changed their advancing dog-trot to a run, their silence to a chorus of yells.

Ahead of them, just at the entrance to the hamlets, a barricade ran from one stone cottage to another right across the way. From this poured, down their narrow aisle, a flood of machine-gun bullets, and from the twin cottages came a spatter of rifle-fire.

"Now we'll get them! Now we can't help getting them!" shrieked Levy.

He bounded in front of Andy, and then pitched into the dust as a baseball runner slides for a base.

With Graaberg in front, the remnant of the company leaped over Levy's corpse. The last semblance of strict formation was lost. Andy, his body stooped forward against the fatal storm, caught sight of Carlo Angelelli on his left, his lips smiling; on the other side came Chrissly with fury in his eyes. Johnson, limping ever so slightly, was falling a little behind, where Andy saw, or felt, the presence of a white Garcia; but Flynn, big Davies and the former pugilist Ryan were all in front, Flynn's voice rising above all the racket in a banshee battle-shriek. The swiftest runners took the lead.

One man jumped high in air and fell down dead. Two or three others, unable to turn aside, crashed over him. The next instant, the company was throwing itself across the barricade and tossing at grips with the defenders.

Chrissly transfixed a mustached Saxon with his bayonet, wheeled and drove the same weapon into the belly of another man, whose blood spurted over his slayer from waist to neck; entangled his weapon in the breast of a third; seized a pistol and blew out the brains of a fourth. Ryan was performing almost equal prodigies with a dripping knife wrenched from the expiring grasp of his first victim. Flynn and Davies were clubbing their guns, the blows cracking bones and crushing skulls. Graaberg had been shot in the right arm, but was

using his pistol with his left. Andy found himself swinging his rifle by its barrel in a mighty circle around his head, screeching Germans falling about him. Even then, he knew that he had no hate in his heart. Individually, these were men uncommonly like himself; they were doubtless—it struck him as odd that the thought should remain in such a crisis of activity—doubtless fellows from towns the Teutonic counterparts of Americus, with friends and relatives like Andy's own. But collectively they were the enemy, they represented reaction, barbarism, the rule of blood-and-iron, and therefore they must die. His rifle-butt whizzed around his head, and another of them fell.

What remained were now running headlong down the way, where the white houses danced in the heat of the struggle. Some members of Andy's company had dashed into the neighboring cottages; they were flinging from the upper rooms the bodies of sharpshooters they had cornered and killed there. His fingers in the throats of a pair of his enemies, big Davies lay at Andy's feet, a knife in his abdomen.

"Don't stop! We've got them on the run!" shouted Graa-berg, waving his pistol in his uninjured hand. "Come on, now!"

Clutching up rifles—any rifles, whether of friend or foe—the company raced down the street. Tiles fell among them, chimney-pots were tossed on their heads. Shots rang out from houses. Other American soldiers, squads from other companies, were bursting in from the byways, and of these some started through the cottages after the enemies hidden there and flung their bleeding bodies on the cobblestones. A few houses, fired by the now desperate Germans, blazed into flame, through the smoke of which rifles cracked, the wounded cried for mercy and fighting men shouted oaths. Chrissly had disappeared again. The dancing Flynn was struck by a far-flung tile; it split his head from top to chin and silenced him in a purple puddle.

On and on up the street, overtaking and subduing party after party of the enemy, Andy and his company fought their way. His last clip of cartridges was soon exhausted. He saw

one gray man, a German major, fire a pistol-shot from a doorway and then, before the pursuers could reach him, explode the weapon at his own temple. He saw many drop their rifles and fling up their hands, crying "Kamerad!" And, in the smoke and smell of slaughter, he saw, but nearer to him now, the radiant armor of the Maid.

Then, with a salvo of shots to clear the way, an entire platoon of Germans ran out of a house a few rods ahead of Andy's friends and, their hobnailed boots thundering on the stones, turned into one of the byways that led to the farther fields across which they had yesterday come victorious. An immediate fusillade followed them, the shots ringing against their water-bottles. Andy and a few others, supposing that their friends would support them, raced after these fugitives down the byway, and with this party of pursuit Garcia was carried along.

At the turning, Andy trod on the outstretched hand of a dead man and fell. He had lost his helmet; his head struck sharply against the cobbles, and he lay for some moments stunned.

When, amid the continued racket of musketry, he raised his eyes, still swimming from the concussion, he was looking directly down the narrow, corpse-strewn alley. At ten yards from him it ended at the stream. Across the water a dozen Germans plunged toward the fields and the safety of the woods beyond.

"Help! Help!" screamed somebody.

There was a tussle going on at the end of the alley. Five Germans were closing in upon a white-faced, shouting American officer, who stood with his back against a cottage-wall.

"Brown, there—for God's sake, help!"

It was Garcia.

His skin was ashen; his eyes protruded wildly; his helmet was gone and his thick black hair, always unruly, bristled as with fear; his uniform was in tatters. He looked like a snarling rat, a rat frightened to the point of fighting, whom terriers have brought at last to bay. In one red hand he held a knife, and with this he struck blindly right and left. One

of his opponents was similarly armed; of the four others one flourished an evidently empty pistol; the remainder were weaponless.

Andy reached for his rifle. The bayonet had been loosened by his fall. Remembering that his ammunition was exhausted, he discarded the rifle and snatched up the bayonet.

The village still crackled with battle. To Andy it seemed as if the result of this minor action, which he accepted as symbolic of the war as a whole, vibrated in the balance; democracy was locked with autocracy in the determinative struggle. Of that struggle Garcia was, however unworthily, a part, and even aside from this aspect of the case, it was impossible to look at the lieutenant and not be sorry for him, nor do what one could, at whatever price, to save him.

It was as if somebody seized Andy's hand and pulled him to his feet. He could feel the fingers close about his palm—the cool firm fingers. He could see, he was sure, the armored figure by his side—could catch one flash of the wonderful eyes. . . .

He ran forward. He hurled himself among Garcia's assailants.

His head struck the man with the pistol in the midriff and sent him sprawling. He felt his bayonet grate against another's ribs. He seized a descending hand that held a knife and wrenched the knife free and captured it himself. A fist caught him between the eyes, but he struck out with the knife.

He had a vision of a woman's face, bright and yet like the face of an ice-statue. . . .

The first man that had fallen scurried into a cottage.

Andy had a sense of Garcia standing, petrified with terror, against the wall.

"Fight!" he cried. "Fight!"

The man that had gone into the cottage came out. Andy, from the corner of his eye, saw the fellow creeping forward with a weapon—it was an old fowling-piece—clutched in his two hands.

One of the fallen men had regained his feet.

The boy struck once more with his knife. Again he struck

and again. Two men went down. He fought like Tydeus, son of Ceneus. . . .

## XIII

Chrissly had gone in search of Léonie.

He ran, regardless of the flying death, distractedly through the village. Mirande-la-Faloise had suffered cruelly from yesterday's bombardment. Scarcely a building in the hamlet of the town escaped the shells, and many had been hit more than once. The church-tower was pitched into the street, and now men had fought across the ruins; its clock lay in the gutter, a mass of broken wires and splintered metal. Here was a house utterly pulverized, there one a mass of newly kindled flames.

Chrissly sought the inn. He went through a bystreet, and no enemy—or friend—checked him. Bumping, stumbling over unseen impediments into unguessed pitfalls, he made his way. Shots rang overhead. Concussions shook the tiles, rattled the ground like an earthquake. There would come moments of comparative silence that, uncompanied, would have seemed ear-splitting, and then staggering volumes of sound like the approaching finale of a horrible composition wherein the hideous hell-music climbed ever higher and higher, note upon intolerable note, beyond all human conception.

He reached what remained of the Inn of the Lilies. It was a mere shell. Only the blackened walls stood. Between them, planks, chairs, tables, bedding—all the once lost and once recovered contents of the ancient resting-place for travelers, all those things which must have meant home for Léonie—rose in a still smoking heap from the ruin of the cellars.

The body of an old man topped this funeral-pyre. His face was calm, but his white locks were wet. His throat had been cut from ear to ear.

Chrissly began madly to tug with bare hands at the smoldering wreckage. He pulled some boards from before what had a day ago been a chimney-piece. A woman crouched



there, an uninjured woman—but not her he sought. This was as old as the man whose corpse lay close by. She raised her hands for mercy.

“Let me stay!” she screamed. “Let me stay! I have nothing!”

“Léonie!” yelled Chrissly. “Where is Léonie?”

The woman hid her face. Chrissly shook her.

“I do not know,” groaned the woman. “Yesterday she hid. I saw two Boche dragging her down that bystreet toward the fields.” . . .

#### XIV

When Chrissly, his bayonet-mounted rifle swung in his hands, ran into that bystreet, he came upon what might have been posed for as a tableau of triumph. Garcia, saved, leaned against the cottage-wall, his eyes closed. Above the bodies of four Germans stood the boyish figure of Andy Brown, his red head up, his freckled face alight, his nostrils wide, his glance clear and fixed, not on anything around him, but on something that he seemed to see in the already brightening sky—something that nobody else could see there, yet something by him so clearly seen that his own gaze took on a radiance no longer earthly.

It was best to look upward, but it had been safer to search the earth. A form that had skulked in the shadow of the houses leaped forward and leveled a fowling-piece against Andy's breast.

There was a flash and a roar. Andy fell.

Chrissly came forward in a single jump. He tripped the already fleeing German. The man, a big fellow, turned over on his back and tried to rise.

Chrissly drove his bayonet into the German's belly. . . .

#### XV

“She's here,” said Andy, when first he opened his eyes. His eyes were very large. “Oh, no, of course—I forgot”—he smiled—“you can't see her.”

They had laid him in the shadow of the wall where his enemy so lately skulked. His head was on Chrissly's lap, and Chrissly's thighs were wet with blood. They had flung Garcia's blouse—an officer's blouse, the blouse of the man that had been Andy's enemy—over the hideous wound. There was no question of finding a surgeon: the boy's breast was shot away.

"I forgot," Andy went on—"I forgot I was dying." He smiled. His freckled face was calmly beautiful. "*I am dying?*" he insisted.

It was not an appeal. It was merely a question asked by one that cared only for the facts.

"No!" said Garcia, kneeling beside him.

"Yes," said Chrissly, bending above the boy. "I guess you got yours, Andy." His voice was very low.

Save for these three and the bodies of the five Germans, the cobbled alley was empty. Throughout the village the firing had ceased. A strange silence brooded over Mirande-la-Falaise, and the sun shone.

"Have we won?" asked Andy.

"We've won," said Chrissly; "and," he added, with a nod toward the cramped corpse of the man that had held the fowling-piece, "I did fer him."

"Then it's all right," said Andy—"if we've won." He seemed content. "I knew we would. You needn't have killed that fellow, Chrissly: it didn't matter."

Garcia broke in; his face was twisted by twitching grief:

"I'm damned sorry, Brown. I'm damned sorry—for *everything*. You're a nice kid."

Andy's eyes studied him. "Oh, that's all right, sir," said Andy.

"But I'm *sorry!*" insisted Garcia.

"You only did what you had to," said Andy. "It's all right, sir."

Garcia, his shoulders shaking, turned his face away.

"Chrissly?" whispered the dying boy.

Chrissly bent closer.

"Léonie?"

"I—I can't find her anywheres."

"Oh," said Andy—the knowledge of his friend's distress clouded his contentment—"it's too bad—it's too bad!"

"But I'm goin' to keep on tryin'," said Chrissly.

"I hope you'll find her, Chrissly."

It was now only a question of minutes, the end.

"Want me to send any word to anybody, Andy?" asked Chrissly.

"Yes." The boy's face brightened. "Thank you. Not straight to mother. Write B. Frank McGregor at Aix. He's going home. Tell him I didn't change my mind once—not once—about *anything* I've done over here—but tell him I said he was good to me—and I remembered about that boy with red hair—and I hope he'll think of me that way."

"I will," said Chrissly.

"B. Frank McGregor, at Aix."

"I unnerstand."

"The insurance more than covers the bond. Mother'll have something. Tell him to give her—my love, Chrissly. And Blunston.—I've kept faith—he'll understand. And all the fellows at home," he resumed.—"That's not important.—I'm only one out of so many.—Still—"

He closed his eyes for a moment. His lips moved—some words about an electric-lamp at a station, only half distinguishable.

Presently, in the midst of a sentence, he opened his eyes again—brown eyes that saw into the sky, and never blinked.

"And tell Her"—his freckled face suddenly became transfigured, it glowed with a strange light—"Joan never left me. I kept getting nearer and nearer, and then Joan never left me. Be sure to say that: Joan never left me. She's"—slowly he raised a steady hand. He pointed upward: "She's right by me now.—We've won. The Cause"—He sat suddenly upright in Chrissly's arms. He seemed to listen for a moment and then to repeat something that he had heard. His voice rang out clear through the mean street. Garcia turned at the sound of it: "The Cause is bigger than its mistakes!"

Involuntarily, the gaze of both his comrades followed the

upward direction of the pointing finger. Did they see nothing?—Or did they catch the glint of shining armor and of golden hair? . . . And, still above that another presence—a Presence with pitying eyes and open arms and the pierced hands of peace? . . .

When they looked down again, Andy's brown eyes had closed, and his face was the face of a little boy. He sank back. With the faint sigh of a child tired from play, he nestled into Chrissy's lap.

"I guess I'll go to sleep," said Andy.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

OF THE GLORY OF THE STARS, AND OF HOW "ONE STAR DIFFERETH FROM ANOTHER STAR IN GLORY"

KEPLER, the *Daily Spy* reporter, passed along Second Street and stopped, as he always did, to call to Blunston seated on the porch:

"Know anything?"

Blunston replied with the usual shake of his iron-gray head and the usual counter-question:

"Do you?"

"Not a thing," said Kepler. "There's a mail in from France. Thought maybe you'd got a letter from Andy."

"No," said Blunston. "Now he's a soldier, I suppose he can't write so often. . . ."

"There's not one Doncaster County boy in to-day's lists," Kepler remarked. "There's nothing new at all, except Babe Campbell told me there's a woman registered at the Hotel Americus with one of those police-dogs you see in the movies. I'm just going up to take a look at it."

Blunston, in the breezeless summer day, continued writing at the notes of the book that he had planned. His weather-beaten face was the face of a man contented; for the first time since he surrendered his ambition to Andy, he was quite tranquil: he had a new work to do; Andy had shown it to him.

During more than thirty months after that August when the European volcano burst with the fires of world-destruction, Blunston had been of those who tried to awaken America to her danger; when the late awakening came, he sacrificed his desires for the sake of Sarah Tollens' son, and felt, or thought he felt, the numbing touch of age; but now Andy's letters, showing him how unready his country had been for

war, forced the question of whether she was giving any thought to the inevitable aftermath—forced, as he looked about him, a negative answer, and fixed in him the determination to show her, before it was too late, the need to prepare for the stupendous tasks of peace and reconstruction. Ere the struggle was ended, while yet Andy and his comrades fought in France, Blunston, in America, would write *The Lesson of the War*.

It was a day, not properly of mist, but of sun-dust; there had been a morning threat of thunder, but before the afternoon was over, the skies would be swept clean for a triumphal pageant of crimson and purple and gold. Already Blunston could see sketches of perfect azure between the dark-leaved boughs of the Norway maple, and upward toward the zenith passed a flash of red as an untroubled cardinal-bird shot by. Thus would the battle-day of America end, and of Americus?

Reflecting the big country, the little town showed him, whenever he walked its streets, plain signs that it had at last undergone the great change. There were some gold stars on the service-flags and some new black among the women's costumes on Elm Avenue. Fresh sorrows came with every morning, and the finely-printed casualty-lists in every paper were picked out with anxious eyes. The names of boys that until a few months since had never been farther from home than Philadelphia, were published as wounded on the banks of the Marne, prisoners in Magdeburg, dead in the Argonne, or, still more dreadfully, "Missing"; lads wrote that they seldom received the letters sent from home and often did not get their pay; they were now known to be improperly clothed; stories came across the sea of aeroplane failure and ordnance and of these failures' price in human lives; the confusion in the records pronounced the unhurt killed, the slightly-wounded seriously, and all the lists were from five to seven weeks delayed.

Yet nothing could have been finer or more American than the way in which these things were borne. Every recurring hardship left the town stronger to meet the apparently endless hardships still to follow; each loan found more subscribers; to the Red Cross and the welfare-workers Americus

subscribed a third of its assessed wealth; if tears were shed for bereavements, they were shed in secret. This was an era of silence. Even Lawyer Dickey had ceased his complaints, and Colonel Eskessen took his bond-depreciations mutely. There would come a time of reckoning; meanwhile it was better to lose a son or a lover than not to have helped him go. Any return to the old life of simple hungers and their satisfaction was too distant to contemplate; above every thought for the future was placed the present determination to triumph.

Blunston was glad to live in such a town and to be writing for such a country. He went quietly on with his work. It was not until half an hour after Kepler's departure that, with Tac slinking behind her, Sylvia interrupted him. She was shaking hands before he could believe his blinking eyes.

"I've been abroad with the Over There Theater League. I landed only a week ago."

"But," stammered Blunston—"but *here* . . ."

She was dressed simply in a close-clinging gown of blue. Against the wide brim of her dark straw hat, her hair rose in golden ripples.

"Don't be afraid," she smiled—she bent to stroke Tac's brindled coat, but she looked up to smile at Blunston—"I didn't come to Americus to pay you a visit, Mr. Blunston: I met a boy over there that you'd told me about, and I came to this town to see his mother."

"Andy? There's nothing the matter?"

"He's quite well. Only I thought his mother"—Sylvia's eyes were wistful now—"might like to see somebody that had seen him in France."

Blunston breathed his relief. There had come no letter from Andy since one written in the training-camp. Blunston had hopes that the German offensive might crumble before his protégé's unit would be fit to fight, but he knew war, and he knew that none should count upon its consistency.

"Oh, of course she will. I'll be glad . . ." He looked at the radiant girl before him and then thought of the shabby little parlor in Sarah's home. "I'll send her a note to come

here . . . tea . . . something of that sort. . . .  
You're sure he's quite . . ."

"He says he's better than he ever was before. He says the trenches seem to agree with him."

"The trenches?"

"Yes, he's been in. Didn't you know? He was going back there when he left Aix. I—I said good-by to him"—she bent over Tac again, and this time she did not look up—"good-by to him at Aix."

The father in Blunston was quick to see the change in her manner. "Sit down. I'll go inside and write a note to Mrs.—Mrs. Brown. . . ."

## II

Miss Hattie Lloyd had not been idle. She had, in fact, bothered Lawyer Dickey until he pretended acquiescence with her suspicions in the mad hope of getting rid of her, whereupon she said:

"If you think I'm right, why don't you *do* something?"

He put her off as long as he could, but he knew from the beginning that no delays of the merely legal mind would be proof against her persistence. In the end, he had to call Ralph into Miss Hattie's presence and there to cross-examine him. The upshot of the matter was that Bolingbroke found himself the poorer by one house.

The miserable man was quite dumfounded. He had his faults, but dishonesty, as Dickey had said, was not among them.

"I can't imagine how this thing happened!" he finally managed to ejaculate. "I can't see how it *ever* happened. I'll look up the papers to make sure—"

"I've done that already," said Miss Hattie, giving herself a little hug.

"—and if you're right—" Ralph tried to continue.

"Pfoof!" said Miss Hattie.

"—as you certainly seem to be," Ralph plunged on, "why, then—of course—but I can't imagine how it ever happened at all."



"Oh, it's perfectly simple," Dickey protested—he hated scenes—"it might occur to any one."

"Only not every one," said Miss Hattie, "would let his wife go around calling a woman like Sarah Brown a liar." And, with a quick cock of her head, she told all that had happened between herself and Mrs. Ralph.

Ralph hurried away. He hurried so swiftly that his wife was in Sarah's parlor fifteen minutes later: an angry young wife with her eyes red and her capacious bosom heaving.

"I just came to tell you," she snapped, "that you've got what you wanted, and I hope you're proud of the way you got it."

Sarah, tall and sallow, was standing beside the center-table that bore the family-Bible with its precious record of Tollenses born, baptized, married and deceased.

"I don't know what you're talking about," she said.

Mrs. Ralph stormed. "Oh, yes, you do! You know well enough. You've turned the Americus Chapter of the Red Cross out of house and home. I was sent up here to apologize to you for saying something or other to that old cat Hattie Lloyd, and I do apologize, for I was a perfect fool to trust her; but I must say I thought *you'd* have a little more dignity than to tell the whole town about that old piece of paper you threatened me with and I burnt."

"You mean," asked Sarah slowly, "that you've found out I own the Tidd house?"

"Found it out? First you tell me it; then Hattie Lloyd tells the whole town, and to-day Ralph shouts it at me as if it was my fault. It doesn't seem to me I had to hunt very much for it."

"I'm sorry you were annoyed," said Sarah.

"Then why couldn't you come to me like a lady?" Mrs. Bolingbroke demanded. "Why did you have to go gossiping to everybody in Americus?"

Sarah drew herself up. "I didn't mention the Tidd house to anybody," she said.

Mrs. Ralph's entrance had been precipitate, and on it the street-door was not latched. Of this Miss Hattie took advan-

tage, as soon as she reached Sarah's dwelling after concluding her interview with Dickey. She came directly to the parlor.

"There's one person you talked to!" flamed Mrs. Ralph at sight of her.

Miss Hattie was nothing if not appreciative of the finer shades of a quarrel. She had wanted to be the first to bear the news to Sarah, but she understood at once that for this she was a moment tardy. The agile old brain supplied all that she had missed; she made the most of her disappointment by scoring off Mrs. Ralph:

"Sarah never opened her lips to me," said Miss Hattie. "I guessed the whole thing myself. If you don't believe me, get Ralph to ask Lawyer Dickey."

Ralph must, in a rare courage bred of indignation, have been rather hard on his wife. This hint of an appeal through him was, at any rate, more than that wife could bear. She sank into a rocking-chair. Her gray eyes, which were never wide, altogether closed with hysteria. She lost all her prettiness.

Miss Hattie, never taking her glance off her victim, embraced herself ecstatically.

"Now it'll get all over t-town," that young woman sobbed. "You'll t-t-tell everybody how I b-b-burned that p-paper—"

"What paper?" asked Miss Hattie.

"It was only a letter," said Sarah hastily. "It didn't matter. It was an accident."

Mrs. Ralph did not hear this. "People will say I've b-been unj-j-just, and I never m-meant to be unjust." Sarah laid a gnarled hand on the distracted young woman's head, but the distracted young woman went on: "Me unjust! And now they'll all hear this—"

Sarah looked at Miss Hattie. That one advanced toward her fallen enemy. This was the moment of Miss Hattie's triumph, but the triumph was too thorough, and even the Miss Hatties of the world can sometimes be magnanimous.

"I guess I know when to keep things to myself," she said. "I'll never breathe a word about the paper. Sarah, you don't seem very grateful for that house, I must say."

Sarah Brown spoke slowly, marking her sentences by awkward pappings of Mrs. Ralph's bobbing head:

"I suppose I can't pretend the house isn't mine if all you people want to say it is, but it's no use to me. I don't need it. Of course I wouldn't think of turning out the Red Cross—it's theirs for as long as they can use it."

Mrs. Ralph struggled upward and flung grateful arms around Sarah's neck. She desisted only to kiss Miss Hattie—and to secure a repetition of the promise that no mention would ever be made of the burned paper.

"Not even to Ralph," she said. "Especially not to him."

And then she invited them both to dinner and wept again, but more gently now, when they both refused.

Somehow Sarah got rid of them both, and, when they had gone, took down from the mantelpiece the two photographs of Andy, the one of him as a little child, the other in his uniform. She looked at them for a long while and laid them on the center-table beside the Bible when she sat down there to write a letter to her son:

"You will be surprised to hear"—she began—"about what has just happened. Some people would call it good luck. For my part, I don't intend to profit by it, but you will be needing money one of these days, I suppose, and when that time comes—"

It was at this moment that Blunston's note arrived, asking her to come at once and meet somebody that had lately seen Andy, alive and well, at Aix-les-Bains.

It was also at this moment that a muddy motor-car rolled up to the Hotel Americus, and a stout little man got out and registered and asked Andrew Blunston's address. The man was followed by a servant, who marshaled a multitude of bags, each bearing a fresh customs-inspector's stamp. . . .

### III

That had been a pleasant tea-party at the old Blunston house. The host seated his guests in the hall that ran right

through the place, the hall into which the seventeenth-century stairway descended. Two doors, each opening across its middle, swung wide, the one letting in the subdued sounds from Second Street, the other giving upon the great back yard with its crowding trees and permitting a glimpse of the silver Susquehanna and the green York County hills on the other side. The sun was setting, as Blunston had known it would, in crimson and purple and gold; the scent of flowers floated in, damp and cool; there came with it the last glad calls of homing birds.

Sarah, somewhat to Blunston's surprise, had taken to Sylvia almost at once, and Sylvia had gone—the radiant Sylvia!—straight up to Sarah and caught her work-hardened hand with trusting directness. For one moment the man saw the elder woman hesitate, saw her dull eyes search the wistful eyes of the younger. Would the guarding mother in Sarah sound an alarm, as the paternal instinct in him had sounded it? Would the Tollens pride, and the mistrust bred by those long years of social affront, reject these advances? Perhaps they wanted to, perhaps they tried. But they did not succeed: Sarah smiled and sat down beside Sylvia, and the mother fell to questioning the girl about Andy as if the girl had known the absent soldier all her life.

Tea was over before the talk died down, and Blunston began to wonder whether he should not have sent for his cousins. Sarah was telling stories of Andy's earliest days: not since his return to Americus to live had Blunston seen her so visibly happy. Sylvia was listening. The scene was very restful; it was like the dawn of peace. . . .

Tac looked up sharply from his place at Sylvia's feet. A heavy step fell on the gravel of the front walk. A pudgy little man with a round face and gray mustache and bags of dark skin under his eyes hesitated at the doorway.

"Mr. Blunston? I suppose you don't remember me."

Sylvia was on her feet. She motioned the dog to fall back. The old cloud of perplexity brushed her brows: "Mr. McGregor!"

He started at the sight of her. While Blunston greeted

him, he seemed to demur about something and then come to a resolution.

Sarah had timidly drawn a step aside. Sylvia came quickly up to the two men. She was white, and her lips trembled.

"Something has happened," she whispered. "I know it. Well, you mustn't—"

But she was too late. Mr. McGregor either had not seen Sarah or did not guess her identity: the emotions that had hurried him from France would be restrained no longer. He flung a packet among the ringing cups and plates upon the tea-table.

"Andy Brown," he said—"there's his distinguished-service cross. I've brought it home to his mother; it came too late for him: he was killed at Mirande-la-Faloise on the fifteenth."

"Stop!" cried Sylvia.

Blunston was trembling like a man ague-stricken. Sarah stood very erect; the lines about her mouth deepened. Oh, it was quite too late: McGregor was so whirled before the onslaught of his grief that he could note no other's.

"A friend of the boy's sent for me."—The words shot from him like bullets from a machine-gun—"Told me about it.—Andy'd asked him to.—Sent his love to his mother.—Said to tell Blunston he'd kept faith.—Said the Cause was bigger than its mistakes.—Said somebody named Joan'd been with him right along—and said he was glad he reminded me of my kid that died."—He raised his absurdly short arms above his head; his voice had been shrill and cracked, but now it rose suddenly to a shriek: "I tell you, Andy Brown was the finest boy in France. I wish to God I'd died in his place!"

Here followed a heavy silence. As with a new-born dignity, Sarah was walking toward the sob-torn little man.

"Mr. McGregor," she said when she reached him, "I am Andy's mother."

She took his startled hand and pressed it. Then, turning to Sylvia, she bent and kissed her mouth and walked through the front doorway, alone.

Blunston watched her, clapped his fingers to his deep-set eyes, drew himself together, ran after her.

## IV

Sylvia stood with her back to the hall, looking among the trees and up the now golden river, across which, behind the pine-clad hills, the sun was setting in a triumph of color. McGregor had collapsed into an old saddle-back chair; his hands hid his face.

Sylvia spoke without turning. Her voice was clear, as always, but monotonous now. "It seemed terrible to me, but it had to be told sometime: she had to know."

"My God!" whispered McGregor.

"I knew it," said Sylvia, "the instant I saw you."

McGregor did not raise his face. "Of course they had to die—some of them: that's war. But where one would die, a hundred are dying because we haven't any tanks to go ahead of them—anywhere along our front—except a few the French lent us—no artillery to support them—the men—and no aeroplanes to reconnoiter with—not an American-made plane."

He stopped a moment, then went on:

"That was my fault—mine and the fellows like me. We wouldn't let anybody in with us—the men up top wanted the power and wouldn't admit they could make a mistake; the contractors down below wanted the contracts. So we promised and muddled together and suppressed the truth—and now the men are dying that wouldn't have had to die!"

A long red ray of sunlight, leaving Sylvia beside it in the shadow, crept into the old hall.

"That was my job over there," McGregor continued: "to keep things quiet about the planes. Other fellows kept them quiet about other things—not—not murderers; just every-day men looking after their contracts."

He said: "I liked Andy the first time I saw him: he did look like my kid. Every time I saw him after that, I liked him better. Everybody did: Evans and Innis, and the men in his company. He fought fair, and I tried to fight him fair. . . .

"But you can't fight fair for a wrong cause," he said. "I didn't know it then; but I knew it when I got to Mirande-la-

Faloise. What could I do?"—He had taken his hands from his ashen face and, with his elbows on his knees, was slowly beating his clenched fists, one against the other. "What could I do? I could see he got the service-cross, and I did see to it—for something I guess he didn't think anything about when he did it. But how could that help? He was dead—Andy—and others: they were dying every minute. What could I do?"

Probably she did not know what he was saying. Certainly, *he* scarcely knew that she was there.

"That's what made me understand: having his friend tell how he died and knowing he was dead—he fought clean and looked like my red-headed kid. I saw, if a game isn't right to begin with, you can't play it any way but wrong.—You've got to play right with God or wrong with the devil.—I'd been against America—against God. So now I'm going to try to play God's game and win.—I had some things unfinished: I let 'em go. Half a million, cold: it don't matter. I just quit."

He got up and again fully realized her presence.

"I've come over here," he said more calmly, "to blow the whole devil's game. That's all I can do now, and I'm going to get a good newspaper-man like Blunston to help me. That'll be Andy's *real* service-cross."

Sylvia turned to him, and he saw her face. He saw it and read it.

"*You?*" he said. "You, too?"

She bowed her head.

"You're married?"

"No."

"Then, in Heaven's name, why didn't you marry *him?*"

She spoke without fear: "Don't you see? I went to work. I had to remember that. But, I *was* going to—after the war."

She walked out into the old back yard among the lengthening shadows of the trees. Tac rose from an unobserved corner and silently followed her.

## V

The sky was crimson; the perfume of the flowers rose about her in an aura—rose as the perfumes had risen that evening along Le Bourget so short a time ago. Almost physically she felt Andy's presence. He was speaking as he had spoken then. A mighty expectancy was upon her; the golden twilight pressed around her as if it were a bed of love and peace. Over the purpling east came a single star, pale but clear. He had loved her, and she had loved him. In the end, she had meant to him something even higher than her love. Joan, he had sent her word, had always been with him: she knew that in this Joan of his she had merely the lesser part, but she knew also that she could yet so live as to be not wholly unworthy of that part of his ideal.

To the ancient river, to the immortal sunset and the eternal hills, she raised her arms. She opened wide her girl-boy hands. This was Andy's country and hers: it was America.

"I gave him to you," she said. "I gave him!"

He had died triumphant in the clear vision of democracy's triumph.

And in Andy's death, Sylvia triumphed, too.

## VI

Watching her from the doorway, McGregor saw her arms descend and fold before her breast. Her attitude was that of a mother nursing. . . .

## VII

The *Daily Spy* printed the news about Andy, the first boy from its town to win the cross, and printed also the general's words accompanying that decoration:

"Private Andrew McK. Brown, Americus, Pa. Infantry. At Mirande-la-Faloise . . . displayed distinguished bravery in going to the assistance of his fatally wounded captain and carrying that officer, under heavy shell-fire, to a field-hospital."



"I can't believe it," a suddenly sobered Minnie Taylor confided to everybody.—She was engaged to a sergeant at Camp Meade.—"And just to think it was me sent Andy over there!"

For the generous little town buzzed with pride, and Andy was become a hero, and Sarah the mother of one. Babe Campbell rang her door-bell and wiped his eyes with his roughened knuckles as he told her how he minded the time Andy helped him arrest three Hungarian chicken-thieves. Kepler cried; Lawyer Dickey refused remuneration for straightening out the deeds to the Tidd house and wrote her a very much scrawled letter in Websterian periods; Colonel Eskessen sent a note that said only "We're proud of Andy and weep with you"; Doctor Dawson called, and Doctor Patrick asked if he couldn't prescribe something, and the girls of the Racket Store dispatched two dozen American Beauties, bought in Doncaster.

Oddly, also, with the passing of Andy, there passed Sarah's social ostracism. The church-people called, and the Blunston girls. Everybody that was anybody called and hoped that, when the proper time came, Sarah would return these visits. Mrs. Bolingbroke called and cried and sincerely wanted to resign the chairmanship of the Americus Chapter of the Red Cross in Sarah's favor. And, finally, a big memorial-service was planned to be held in the Opera House, at which the senior judge of the Doncaster County Court was to preside; a speech was to be made by the junior Pennsylvania senator, and the Bishop of Harrisburg was to pronounce the benediction. The *Daily Spy*, at McGregor's suggestion, had seen to all this, and it was then that Ralph Bolingbroke would make an announcement: how Andy's mother, who had lent the Tidd house to the Red Cross for the duration of the war, would, immediately thereafter, give it outright to the town as a free club for returned soldiers and the young fellows of Americus; how Mr. B. Frank McGregor contributed a check for twenty-five thousand dollars toward its support, and how Blunston and Ralph himself headed a list of citizens pledging substantial annual subscriptions to the upkeep of this Andrew McKinley Brown Memorial Community Center.

## VIII

Even Blunston began to see that Andy had not died in vain. At first, Drew, through whom the boy had gone abroad, felt as if it was his hand that had killed him. In spite of his intimate acquaintance with war, this death seemed only a piece of reckless waste. He felt it as one feels the ruin of some delicate mechanism, the irretrievable destruction of a dead inventor's only model for a useful device, the wanton slaughter of a shade-tree. All that buoyant spirit had been spilled upon the winds, that source of cheerful energy and resourcefulness scattered, the very soul of it blotted out. There would be left but a day on the calendar, a house with a name above its door, and the brief memory of man.

Yet that mood did not last. Gradually, he recaptured Andy's vision, saw that no man died wastefully who gave his life toward the death of autocracy, saw that he, Blunston, and thousands of others would have to fight insidious autocracy at home as Andy had helped to fight the open manifestation of it abroad, remembered *The Lesson of the War*, joined in McGregor's plan for an exposure of the evils done—and studied the soul of Andy's mother.

## IX

And Sarah?

Had she wondered how the sky could be so blue? Had she pictured the dying boy that sent her his love, the baby that she had nursed and a German killed?

Nobody ever knew. What people observed was only that she learned to say without tears much that few could have said and not broken down; that she could even talk calmly of that distant day when the bodies of America's fallen should come home again and aver that she would let her tree lie where it had fallen.

In Andy's death, she had learned the kindliness of the friendly town that she had so long feared as unkindly and hated as an enemy. He would never have been contented not to do his whole duty, as a man and a citizen; doing that, he

had opened her eyes. It was the end of her, but she realized that it was the beginning of things infinitely more important than was she. While those things grew, Andy showed her love, and love was God. The Cause was not only bigger than its mistakes: it was bigger than its sacrifices.

One evening, when the street was full of working men going to their waiting homes after a day of labor well rewarded, she took away that silken banner which Drew Blunston had given her. From Andy's untouched attic-room, from the silent company of the thumbed books, the now broken tennis-racket and the dusty dance-programs strung across the mirror, she brought his boyhood box of paints and sat down to a slow task. Then in the front window she rehung the service-flag.

It bore a golden star. . . .

## X

On the cloud-laden morning of Monday, the eleventh of November, 1918, that portion of the American front along the hills beyond Mirande-la-Faloise was, until eleven o'clock, as active as it had been during every day of the preceding week. Explosions tore the air. Great clouds of dust and smoke leaped up from the hills opposite, where the enemy lay entrenched. The air was thick with war and death. The opposing lines were within easy rifle-range of each other; to lift one's head an inch above a parapet was to die.

On the stroke of the hour, however, there fell a sudden stillness. To the ears of the combatants, long inured to the brazen din of battle, that stillness was momentarily more awesome than the fiercest bombardment.

Then, from the American trenches, there rose, at first uncertain, but steadily gaining force and assurance, a cheer.

It was faintly echoed from the farther hills.

There was a pause. Heads appeared above the American parapets—heads unhelmeted.

Upon the horizon silhouettes leaped up, and tossed their empty arms in the jubilant air.

The hour was the hour of the signing of the armistice.

The war had ended.

## XI

That evening, all along the line, lights were visible from the ruined villages for the first time since the summer of 1914: they were the candles lighted by celebrating soldiers and such of the inhabitants as remained there. In a broken window of the sole wall of the Inn of the Lilies that remained upstanding, an Ameriran soldier and a tall, full-bosomed French girl had just ignited a single taper. The light showed the Croix de Guerre on Chrissy Shuman's breast; in Léonie's dusky cheeks it showed the red rose of joy.

She seized his arm in both her hands. Her flashing eyes were wet.

*"Mais, je suis bouleversée,"* she murmured.

Chrissy smiled. "Me, too," he said. He spoke in his unaccented French. "You must remember that you've only been back here for half an hour, and I don't know yet how you got away from those Heinies that took you in the fight here."

"It was very simple"—Léonie regarded him with the clear eyes of an animal: "I killed them."

On the whole, it seemed better to pass by the details of that. "And then?" asked Chrissy.

"Then, since I could not find you here, I went back to the other village and the other inn—where we first met."

They were leaning beside the gutting candle and looking through the broken window. A glow was visible from the American trenches and, on the dark sky, could be seen the reflection of another glow from trenches still more distant: the trenches of those who, for more than four long years, had been the world's enemies. Toward that reflection Chrissy pointed.

"It's *Götterdämmerung*," he said.

"That is a Boche word," said Léonie, her dark brows contracting. "What does it mean?"

"It means," averred Chrissy—his interpretation of the word was more from the sound than from his knowledge of its sense—"it means the end of idols."

He slipped an arm about her waist and drew her toward

him. Her brown eyes, limpid and wondering, looked into his. Against him her firm breasts panted.

"It means a new world, *mon cher*," she said. Her firm teeth flashed white behind the red of her parted lips. "America gives France a new world—and you give it to me, *hein?*"

He bent his face to hers.

"I guess we've won, somehow: democracy and such things have," said Chrissy.

Léonie waved a free hand toward a crimsoned sky. "Not 'somehow.' I think I can see Ste. Jeanne up there; I believe well that she has been fighting for us always."

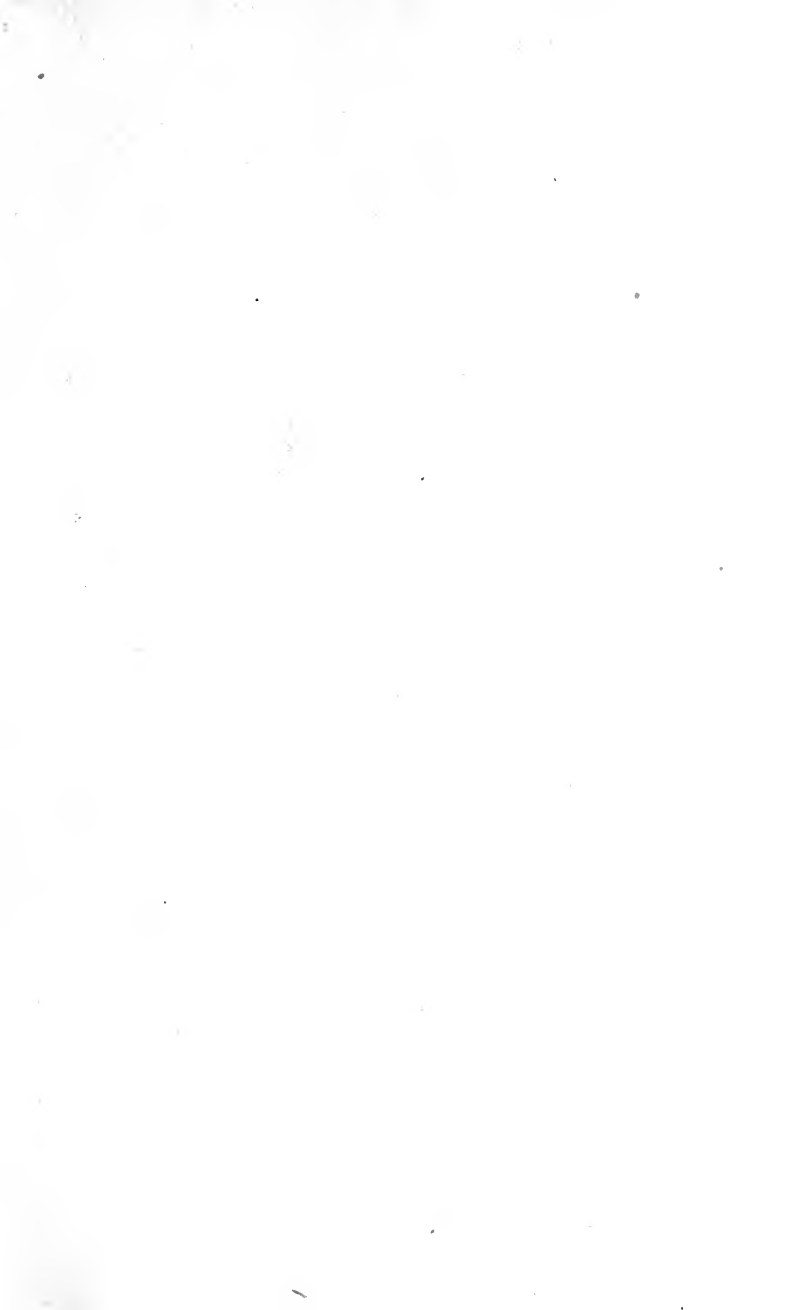
Her lover hesitated. Her mention of the Maid had touched his memory. "Yes," he said at last, "it's cost a lot, and those who wasted have got to pay—not only the Boche, but those who helped the Boche because they didn't help us." He gave his eyes to her again. "But it was Andy told me when he died—you remember Andy Brown?—"The Cause is bigger than its mistakes.' There's ruin everywhere"—he glanced about the ruin of the inn—"but we'll rebuild."

Léonie, with a stifled cry, drew his face to hers:

"We will rebuild—together."

THE END





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